



Quad-monthly

Issue - II

acKUaint

semi-scholarly, trans-disciplinary journal



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KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY WHITEPAPER

UNSEEN AND UNDERMINED ACADEMIC AND FINANCIAL ANNALS

Kathmandu University: Kathmandu University publishes white paper to gauge and reevaluate its financial and academic benchmark. Ratified by the 621th executive council grid under a five member team of Prof. Mahesh Banskota, it is based on authentic evidence and narratives of associates of all seven schools.

The paper emphasizes a key analysis of all the seven schools whose autonomy, integrity and the functioning scope is projected under a dilemma since schools are not working under the same level of autonomy. Furthermore, the rise of risking long term liabilities addressing the prior accords of KU with its stakeholders and the associates have been specified although a detailed counterfactual analysis in this regard has been recommended by the Vice Chancellor. Albetting the educational thrift, its declining growth rate is indicating a momentous adverse risk in the forthcoming time.

The growth rate of revenue and expenditure both have declined and the inclusive income to assets ratio is pretty good but the ratio seems to grow at an even slower rate in the previous years. R&D is the key area which is exponen-

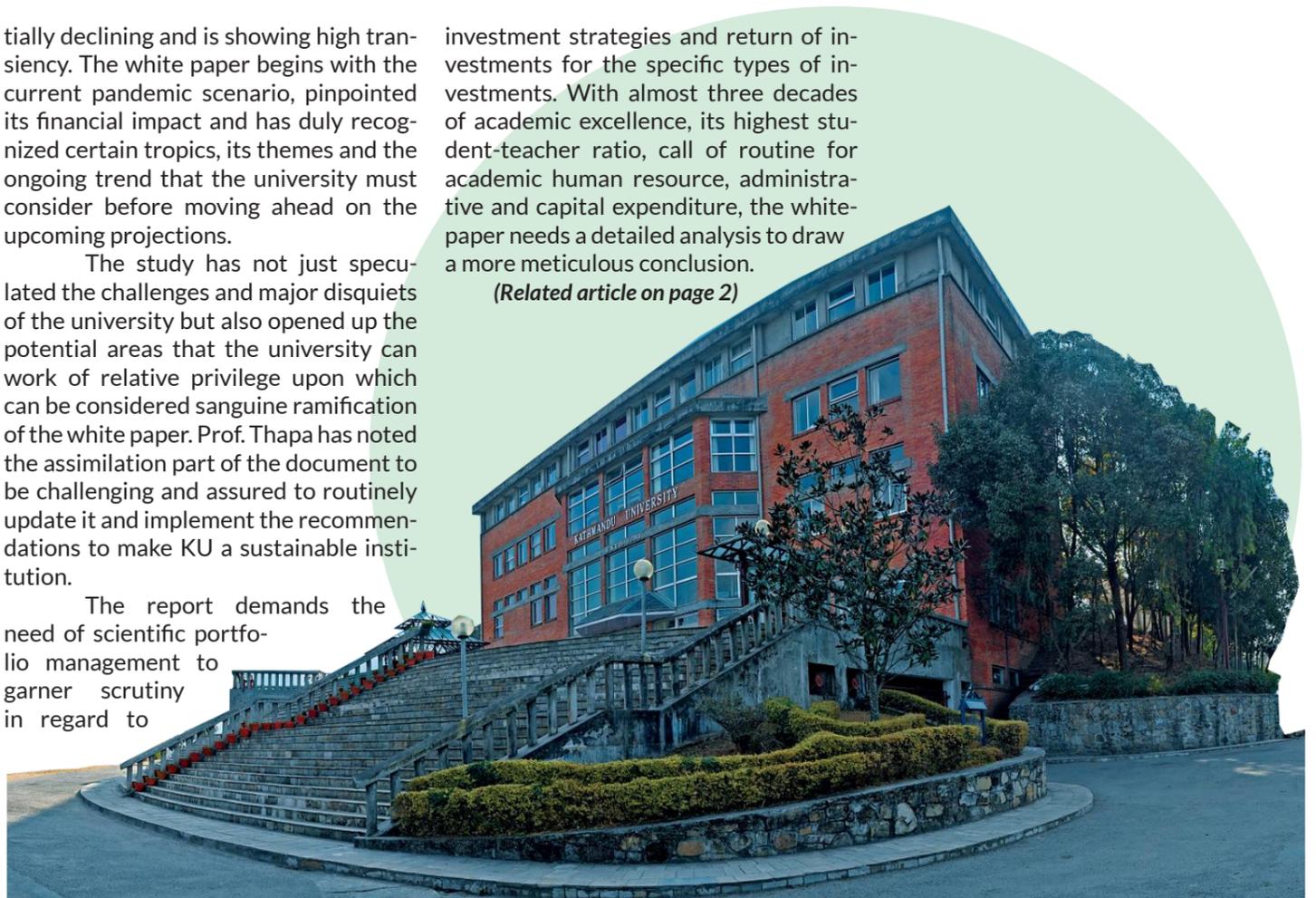
tially declining and is showing high transiency. The white paper begins with the current pandemic scenario, pinpointed its financial impact and has duly recognized certain tropics, its themes and the ongoing trend that the university must consider before moving ahead on the upcoming projections.

The study has not just speculated the challenges and major disquiets of the university but also opened up the potential areas that the university can work of relative privilege upon which can be considered sanguine ramification of the white paper. Prof. Thapa has noted the assimilation part of the document to be challenging and assured to routinely update it and implement the recommendations to make KU a sustainable institution.

The report demands the need of scientific portfolio management to garner scrutiny in regard to

investment strategies and return of investments for the specific types of investments. With almost three decades of academic excellence, its highest student-teacher ratio, call of routine for academic human resource, administrative and capital expenditure, the white-paper needs a detailed analysis to draw a more meticulous conclusion.

(Related article on page 2)



SUNAULO KATHA

WE SHARE YOUR STORIES

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." The world is indeed a stage. There are billions of stories performed on this stage. Each story is handsomely penned with ink that is unique to every other one. Some stories are written with every shade of glitter that exists, while some are barely carved out on rocks. Nonetheless, all these stories are eloquent and they belong to the stage.

Out of these stories, some are achingly beautiful and they stand out. They deserve ovations, for they get embossed on our minds till the end of eternity. The words are drenched in the beauty of hope, strength, and move the deepest core of our hearts.

acKUaint brings you such stories that are worth a read. Sunaulo Katha is an honest attempt to shed some light on

raw, inspiring real-life stories that have a lot to offer. We interview individuals whose inklings of identity deserve illumination.

"The world would seem like a better place if people stopped treating us like objects of pity and charity."

These are the words borrowed from this issue's Sunaulo Katha, which is a sketch of a visually impaired student of Kathmandu University, Sandip Thapa's story. This story is full of ups and downs, highs and lows, but what doesn't change throughout this course is the main character's will to find the light at the end of the tunnel. His unique take on life might as well change the course of many more stories.

(Related stories on page 18)

Kathmandu University Broadening Centres of Excellences at Panauti Municipality

Introspecting the common aspiration of the Panauti Municipality, Kathmandu University has planned to extend its outreach center for the School of Law (overall) and School of Medical Science establishing a specialized hospital for preclinical sciences and pulmonological care units. Likewise, Civil Engineering and Architecture under the School of Engineering will also be off shooting a center of study and research.

The joint meeting consisted of the vice-chancellor Dr. Bhola Thapa, registrar Dr. Subodh Sharma and respective deans of School of Law, School of Medical Sciences, School of Engineering and School of Science and managerial heads of the university. Similarly, the mayor Bhim Neupane,

deputy mayor Gita Banjara and their administrative team represented the municipality.

The first convention concluded that the municipality will provide a minimum of 1 Ropani land to the School of Law for its management and arrange land for the construction of the specialized hospital near the Kantha Ganeshtan area. In addition, for the construction of the Civil-Engineering and architecture center, the municipality has proposed its planning in the heart of the Panauti city and outset the foundational endeavors. The university and the locals of Panauti assure that this initiative will be conducive to the sustainable development of the municipality.

- GCT Correspondent

KU's Academic and Financial Annals

The Unseen and Undermined Segments through the Whitepaper

Photo credit: Shabda Poudel

The best-ranked university of Nepal having a world rank of 3280 and excellence of 3455, Kathmandu University published its white paper to monitor and figure out economic, academic, and R&D indicators under the chair of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Bhola Thapa. He believes the report to be an imperative landmark for the university further denouncing its misconduct to draw peculiar feedback of the current situations and the upcoming future implications.

Tribhuvan University, being the 12th largest in the world amasses around 76% of the total student share of Nepal, KU still is ahead in global rankings, relatively being a small university that accounts for 4% students (18356) share of the nation, with seven constituent and sixteen affiliated institutes, the university's enrollment statistics dropped from 12.3% in 2013 to 2.3% in 2019. Furthermore, it is projected to decline in the advent years that owns the country's declining economic growth rate. Similarly, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) aims at 0.87 which is very low as compared to other universities. The provincial student share is also uneven as per the UGC data that states the university has no student enrollment from Province no 2, Karnali, and Sudurpaschim province. But in this regard, the UGC data seems irrational. However, the acceptance standard seems to have been monopolized by MPhil and PGD programs, which account for 100% and 90% of students of the nation. It can be noted that an immense segment of MPhil, Ph.D., and PGD students are in KU compared to other

universities.

Amidst all the schools, KU appears to have high shares in the School of Medical Sciences that accounts for 55% of total students of the university having 11 privately affiliated medical institutions that have been a matter of grievous concern and sharp criticism at the national level by various civil societies. The overall enrollment rate of the university since the past seven years has been 4.3% with increasing student shares in the School of Arts, School of Education, and School of Law whereas the share of students from School of Science and School of Management has been steadily low and that of School of Engineering has been unchanged as per the white paper. Although 4% of the national student share is with KU, it holds the largest medical graduate population of the universities with more than 10,000 (35.7%, 2018) students in the medical school. Locking up 33.27 students per teacher, the student-teacher ratio has been a serious problem for the faculties at KU. TU being the largest reports 15.61 students per teacher which is less than half of that of KU and opposite of common perception.

Economically, KU being the only non-government university has testified its enterprises in producing technical human resources for the nation and flourished the local economy through its campuses. Student contribution apart from medical school is 41% of the fees that further witnessed decrease owing to the Covid-19 factor in the previous year. Additionally, the R&D endowment has not increased since 2014 fluctuating

the R&D culture. Capital expenditure has decreased dramatically from 26.1% in 2063 to 10.8% in 2076 which can be attributed to exploding salaries and benefits. A fair share of capital expenditure and other recurring costs must always be maintained in an economically viable budget. The study has highlighted that the canteen service of the university is on a recurring vain loss every year that saw an increment in loss from 3.3% in 2014 to 26% in 2019/20 which can be postulated due to a decline in surplus mainly because of the pandemic. The document has highlighted that the KU's investment made as total funds or assets is hiking exponentially from 14% in 2014 to 50% in 2020. Somewhere, the system has failed to acknowledge the investment profitability and seems to whack the portfolio without proper inspection.

Witnessing the financial authority and leverages, KUSMS enjoys special status and authority through the KUSMS Financial Rules act (2064 BS) from the central campus which can be correlated at par with the powers of the registrar. Direct acquisition of items up to 25 lakhs without bidding has been licensed to it that none of the other six schools can relish. The pervasive eleven affiliated medical colleges all over the east and west of the nation and the hospital should have contributed to the overall financial system of the university but the KUSMS uses all of its revenue (student fees and hospital service charges) to run itself on a yearly basis. Aforementioned world ranked 3280, there is a prevailing question with reference to the place value by how much the university will be ranked

ahead if the School of Medical Sciences that annals 55% of total students are ignored for a while and ranked only taking the rest 45% into account.

Regarding collaborative linkage, the white paper mentions 152 MOU's with different academic institutions which are supposedly not properly regulated and 73 of which are not even reviewed after the first MOU. The regulatory trend of KU is seen as less than satisfactory regarding such MOUs.

The abuse of the financial authority has been equivocally seen given to the hiking fluctuations that lack clarity upon such investments. Who is managing and how is managing the KU's investment is a matter of serious concern. Citing the high fluctuations in the investments that lack lucidity on the return of the ventures, the team has recommended a very careful study by outside experts who can provide short-, medium- and long-term guidelines for KU's investment resources.

Observing all the academic and financial status of the university, the question now arises if the university can be a global educational leader or not? At least in the subcontinent? There is an urgent need for a vision for growth where the university wants to be in the coming score years in order to be a sustainable university having sustainable teaching and collaborative research activities with others alike. The whereabouts of KU graduates who are supposedly called elite students migrating abroad is a grave concern regarding the sustainability of the graduates of the nation. The paper has raised some serious valid questions: How relevant is KU to Nepal's needs and those of the local community? How is KU addressing the country's HR needs, skills requirements and contributing to addressing the development problems faced by the country? What is the role of KU in the future development of Nepal? What is the role of KU in the community where it exists? With so much knowledge in the University, what is being done about poverty, energy, environment, health, and so on? Perhaps a complex detailed analysis in collaboration with the policy experts of the nation is rudimentary on this subject matter.

- GCT Correspondent

Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Constituent Colleges	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Affiliated Colleges	15	15	16	16	16	16	16	16
Enrollment(% of total students in Nepal)	12954 (2.31%)	14550 (3.17%)	15653 (3.85%)	16658 (7.2%)	17080 (4.6%)	14942 (4.32%)	18356 (4.15%)	18860 (4.2%)
Faculties	176	198	211	212	222	234	242	230
Staff	189	198	199	193	196	209	218	254
Teacher Student Ratio	27.72	27.66	28.24	32.08	32.02	33.36	41.2	39.57
~Expenditure (In Arba)	1.15	1.1	1.25	1.4	1.5	1.65	1.8	1.75
~Income (In Arba)	1.25	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.8	2.2	1.8

KUSMS AT FRONT LINES AGAINST COVID



The economically agile fraction around the globe is being profoundly affected by Covid 19; a global virus pandemic. In addition to the threat to public health, the economic and social breakdowns threaten the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions. From the index case identified in Wuhan city, China, and its first report to WHO on 31st December 2019 to sweeping the world with 176 million positive cases and 3.82 million deaths, the terms "COVID-19", have taken their roots in the hearts and minds of the people.

The repercussions of the COVID 19 are undeniable. Nepal is considered as one of the highly vulnerable countries for the Covid 19 pandemic with minimum resources to tackle the outbreak. During these crucial times, any and every single hand raised to oversee, regulate and mitigate the dangers do count. One such hand is a community-based non-profit hospital located in Dhulikhel.

Dhulikhel Hospital reduced the cost of PCR tests to Rs. 500 and also made it free to those who cannot afford it. It has a special Covid care unit for the treatment of Covid patients. Dhulikhel Hospital, through its outreach centers (18 outreach centers) has been providing essential care to the patients in rural areas too. Various research

activities on Covid 19 are being conducted by the hospital. Psychological care services are being provided to positive patients and their families. Dhulikhel hospital stands with the notion that every human being has the right to health. Even though hospitals strive to rise to the challenge amidst a crippling financial crunch which threatens to affect all aspects of their service, it is still committed to ensuring that their patients continue to receive the best healthcare service.

Medical students in this hospital have felt the hardships and cries of the people and have also seen the frontliners working incessantly, day and night, to save every single life in any possible way, giving their total effort. Students reported the pandemic had moderate effects on their stress and anxiety levels but the perseverance and dedication of every health worker on the field motivated them more by a sense of purpose or duty, altruism, perception of good performance, and values of professionalism than by their interest in learning. With the beacon of hope from the resilience of all front-liners that hard work always pays off against all odds and the bright dawn awaits, medical students are positive to work hard and are striving for perfection.

- GCT Correspondent

Medical education commission planning to provide scholarship this year onward

The Medical Education Commission is making arrangements to provide 10 percent students the privilege to study on scholarship from this year in the medical education program, run under the Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences(KUSMS).

"A public educational institution is an educational establishment funded by a government, public trust, or other entity with public ownership," reads the Medical Education Act's Article 2 (p). KUSMS is in a joint venture between Kathmandu University (financed in part by the government and dependent on national and international organizations) and Dhulikhel Hospital (a community hospital), affirming its public educational status.

As per the Act, public educational institutions must provide 75 percent scholarships. The Act states (in Sub-section 7 of Article 17) that "public educational institutions shall arrange for at least 75 percent of undergraduate seats to be free scholarships, and such seats may gradually be increased in consultation with the Commission." However, KUSMS has been charging students the same fees as other private medical col-

leges, but without the same scholarship schemes as provided by them. A quota for 85 students was occupied by KUSMS for MBBS last year, but only one scholarship seat was awarded. The government has not yet permitted KU to operate as a private university, because it functions as an institution using grants and land from the government.

KU does not offer regular scholarships in programs, other than in MBBS. Last year, only one scholarship seat was provided in BSc Nursing, however KU did not agree to give quota scholarships claiming that there was an agreement between the university and the Ministry of Education to teach only one student on scholarship.

Currently, MEC officials claim that a ten percent scholarship will be provided for all courses which are offered at the undergraduate level by KUSMS. KUSMS will, however, offer tuition scholarships to 10 percent of the MBBS students starting next academic year. The commission will be responsible for implementing this measure which will determine the seat prices and fees.

- GCT Correspondent

School of Law Conducts Second Intake for the Very First Time

Kathmandu University School of Law conducted its very first double-intake for the year 2021. While the first intake took place in January, the second intake took place three months after, in April.

Many students who had given the HSEB or CBSE board exams the last year were disappointed that they would be losing a whole year out of their academic career because of this pandemic, but the fortunate-yet-atypical notice announced by the School of Law prevented this from happening. "I was disheartened when the Board announced that our results would be postponed", said Astha Paudel, a first semester law student "I had thought that I would end up taking a gap year that I didn't want. When I saw KUSL's surprising notice, I was so glad that I would get this opportunity to make the best of my time". Amidst this inconceivable arrival of the pandemic, this second intake held by the Law school gave the students a ray of hope.

The question may arise as to how the already limited area of the School of Law will manage in order to accommodate the students once physical classes take place. The school has allocated a spare classroom that had been a demure room used for meetings. However, due to the limited area of the Law school, this may be the only second intake present within its Dhulikhel vicinity.

While this process of conducting a second intake helped various students, it can also be seen as a survey. In roughly two years, the School of Law along with other faculties will be shifted to Panauti, which has the capacity to hold a greater number of students than that at Dhulikhel. The second intake gives the school an estimation of what they will handle in the near future. This procedure has opened up possibilities to both the students of Law as well as the school itself.

- GCT Correspondent

GARFIELD



SUDUKO

5	3		7			
6		1	9	5		
	9	8			6	
8			6		3	
4		8	3		1	
7			2		6	
	6			2	8	
		4	1	9	5	
			8		7	9

Send your solutions to: mail@gctatku.org.np



AAUZAR- Z FOR GENERATION Z

Generation Z, the generation for youth and new innovation, four masterminds of KU, who believed to change the traditional, time-consuming weaving techniques for all the weaving enthusiasts. They planned a convenient and eco-friendly weaving machine that is designed to benefit all the marginalized and weaving enthusiasts to open their own start-up from a small capital. The journey of Aauzar started when one of the team members saw her grandmother weaving in an old chair. This small moment impacted her to the extent that she could not stand her grandmother's suffering. Followed by this incident, she along with her team members came up with the idea of making a weaving machine that is convenient to use for all and that takes less effort than the traditional way of weaving. A study has shown that continuous bending and bad posture while weaving affects the internal organs, and in the case of pregnant women, their fetus also. So, to tackle all the problems faced by the weavers across the country, team

Aauzar is trying to make an eco-friendly weaving machine that is almost 100% green and sustainable, as it mainly uses old chairs and bamboo. This project got a boost with the grant announcement from the British Council. Being the interns in crafting the future and knew that they could easily apply for this grant. With hopes and aspirations to complete this project they applied for the grant and attended an incubator session for six days. These sessions were very effective to sharpen their ideas. The British Council used a quadruple bottom line, a business performance evaluation technique which included the knowledge about: profit, people, planet, and purpose to enhance the ideas presented. After the completion of these sessions, the British Council granted them a huge sum of nearly 16.4 lakhs to continue their project. This was a huge nudge for them to accomplish all the aspirations they had with Aauzar. They still have many plans for making this project work well. They don't view this grant as an achievement, rather,

this grant has just pushed them one step closer to achieving their goals. They said, "we will only achieve something if our weaving machine helps people uplift their weaving experience." They plan to expose the weaved clothes produced from that loop across the country, giving all the small entrepreneurs a platform for their products.

The materials used in the construction of these machines are collected from their collaboration with many scrap dealers who will provide them as many old chairs as they want. The main objective of this sustainable weaving machine is not to dominate the market with their weaving machine, but to provide an economically friendly weaving machine for all the marginalized communities.

Their plan to sell the produced products by collaborating with different international fair trade organizations, will give their product an exposure to the international market and also provide training and conduct seminar sessions on how to operate the machine. Along with the training, their other focus is to make these weaving machines available to as many needy people as possible. With availability of these machines for sale, they have also planned to provide EMI service to make the process of purchasing easier. They are also planning

to collaborate with nepal nut crafts and many other organizations to give exposure to their products in nepali market. Since they are planning to serve the poor many organizations have promised to help them to expose their product to the market.

Art and craft are a proud aspect of Nepalese culture but it has not been utilized and researched well. So they are taking a step forward in exploring the art and craft of Nepal and want to motivate the new generation the importance of art, craft and culture. Though we don't have a history of automated traditional equipment and technology, we can explore more about our traditional equipment and bring improvement/modification if necessary preserving the same cultural sentiments.

While achieving something beyond what the stereotypical society expects from them, it was not strange for them to receive backlash. But these four mechanical engineers broke the barriers put out by society. Being mechanical students, working in the arts sector made several heads turn, but these reactions from people were never a setback for them but a motivation to prove them all wrong.

- GCT Correspondent

Government Through the People's Eyes

With a partnership between Kathmandu University School of Arts, the Asia Foundation, and the Interdisciplinary Analysts, the latest report on "A Survey of Nepali People" was published on April 9, 2021. Among a wide audience, this report was jointly announced by the Vice-Chancellor of Kathmandu University and Madam Ambassador of Australia to Nepal. This is the third consecutive report in this survey chain. Public opinion polls are well-established mechanisms for capturing popular sentiment and are intended to assist the current government in better grappling with public moods and priorities and realigning the course of development, service delivery, and overall governance. This study was hugely dependent on the public's viewpoint, as 7,060 Nepalis were randomly picked from 588 wards throughout the country's seven provinces to form a na-

tionally representative sample. The survey focused on five main field ideas: public outlook and national mood, personal safety, and dispute resolution, identity and social relations, governance and political participation, and economic outlook and access to information.

The findings given in the study can provide crucial insights and a route ahead for development since the respondents were randomly picked from the Nepali population at the national, provincial, and local levels, using all the rigors of modern survey procedures. Although this report poses an accurate result of Nepalese opinions, the major stumbling block of the survey is its peccable timing. Since this poll was taken in early 2020, before the Nepalese government implemented a lockdown to combat the spread of Coronavirus, it only provides a snapshot of life before the lockdown. However, it presents a great

opportunity for them to survey after the COVID-19 outbreak is contained and compare the national mood before and after the pandemic.

Moving onto the statistics presented by the survey, it can be seen that 65.5% of the people believed that the country was heading in a positive direction of development and prosperity. In addition to this, the survey also revealed that the four grounds of hope for development are better roads, better supply of electricity, better access to health services, and improvement in educational services. Improved personal and local security-related concerns or threats, improved social circumstances, improved local economic conditions, increased trust in local government entities, and improved local political conditions are among the favorable results obtained from this study. Moreover, Nepalese have above-average levels of satisfaction with their health, roads, and education.

This comprehensive report consists of findings regarding some critical issues. The major shocking revelation of this survey was how unaware Nepalese people were of the changes made in the constitution of Nepal 2015, the budget plan of their respective government, lack of awareness of political parties and media, and their lack of participation in development work. One major highlight that most people agreed on was corruption being the reason for the lack of development work in the country.

This survey presents a clear narration of the thoughts of the Nepalese. If the improvements are brought regarding the opinions presented through this study, then Nepal is not very far from development.

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EDITORIAL

After the crippling lockdown and political chaos, the nation is filled with the hope of rising on its feet again. The scarcity of vaccines and horrifying scenes at the hospital we saw a few months ago is finally being addressed. With the import of vaccines from China and the grant of vaccines from the USA and other countries, the government finally has what it needs to prevent and fight the third wave.

However a few months back, the scenario was different. From being one of the first South Asian countries, right after India, to start administering vaccinations, to using an extended lockdown six months later as the only measure to control the constantly rising covid cases; our government failed us. Although the first lockdown could not have been avoided, we should and could have been better prepared for the second wave. While cases rose to alarming heights in India and our health professionals were screaming themselves hoarse about the potential threats of the second wave, our political leaders were busy one-upping each other in some twisted power play. Playing a blame game instead of uniting to solve the health crisis.

Rather taking moves to save the lives of people, the 'people-elected' went on to 'tear down' the constitution to pacify the hunger of power play and the self-ego. The immature action of the leader is a disgrace in itself, but what shook most of us was how people were backing up on the government's attempt to humiliate the constitution and rule of law. The overwhelming number of people on social media giving their opinions justifying this straight-up dictatorial act was a circus in itself. This growing number of radical followers foreshadows a dark time in the nation's future and our democracy. On the other hand, the Supreme Court has clearly stated and reminded that no one is above the law. A hundred pages long verdict not only has restored the parliament but also has elucidated about constitutionalism, parliamentary practice, very basic foundations of democracy including the responsibilities of the President and Prime Minister. KP Sharma Oli will go down in history as the prime minister who was ousted by court order, and the reason: for sabotaging the constitution.

The Oli government had forgotten even the basic responsibilities of playing a parental role. While citizens were paddling desperately to stay afloat, trying to uphold a collapsing health system, the government remained entangled in their power plays; with even the opposition being tempted with the possibility of forming their government. The silence of the largest opposition party, Nepali Congress, made them compliant with the government's unethical action, leading the citizens to believe there was a bigger plot at play here. Being the opposition, it was their duty to call out the actions of the PM and madam President but the accountability and the opposition's responsibility to check and balance too were lost in avarice.

When a system fails, there are usually multiple causes, and our digital journalists were at the heart of the crisis. Their rush to cover baseless sensation-

al news, causing havoc with non-factual content, and the news with the sole motivation of capital gain blinded what is supposed to be the third eye of the nation.

Capable individuals of the 21st century should not just be able to identify the problem, but also provide solutions to the existing problem. The days of measuring intelligence with general knowledge are over since all the information needed is just a few types away nowadays, and pointing out the obvious problem is not a hard or significant task. So, youths of tomorrow should have this critical skill of identifying and solving the problem and fixing the patches that weaken the system. As a citizen, we must be able to defend positive actions and question/condemn immoral, unconstitutional actions being impartial to the political ideologies we incline to. But the temptation of making a political career has corrupted our youth, who back their party's action no matter how wrong they seem and also stay silent when their political party has failed its duty towards the nation.

However, the past can neither be controlled nor changed, we must now take responsibility to avoid the same mistakes that brought the nation to its knees. We cannot remain limited to pointing fingers, we must take active action for progress. If the game of dirty politics were to continue, and leaders are not held accountable for their incompetent actions, the third wave will surely hit us and hit us hard. Since the lockdowns have already crippled our economy and held back developmental work, we simply cannot afford another lockdown.

The Deuba government should come up with plans and future strategies to strengthen the nation and be better prepared for another wave of covid. The first and immediate response should be vaccinating the citizens. Instead of focusing on the ways to stay in power, both the government and the opposition should identify the possible weakness of the state and emphasize solving problems that lay just under the surface, ready to ravage an already weakened state.

Since the internet and youtube have evolved to become one of the major sources of information, digital journalists should have played their part in identifying the major problems and providing solutions to the crisis. They could have used their resources to create necessary discourse based on information provided by actual experts in the respective fields. At the failure of the state, the digital media could have acted as an effective tool to call out and address burning national issues. Instead, they chose to focus on creating non-contextual, irrelevant content solely to create traction. While they could be raising public health awareness, exposing the institutional hollowness of the health system, or even the police. Their rush to cover baseless sensational news, causing havoc with non-factual content, and the news with the sole motivation of capital gain blinded what is supposed to be the third eye of the nation.

KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY PROPOSES RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

Kathmandu University has initiated a research fellowship for 150 students. The litigation of research grants a professor and associate professor to supervise a student who are continuing their Masters, MPhil and Phd studies. This program is initiated in order to build the caliber and capacity of the faculty members, researchers and enhance the research culture of the university as a whole and to open doors to students who are aspiring for higher education at KU.

Graduate students of Masters by research, MPhil and Phd are eligible

150 students from Masters to PhD will receive the fellowship within the coming Shrawan. The supervisor will choose 'fellows' and send the list to respective heads of departments that further will be analyzed and confirmed by the deans of their schools.

There are a total of 111 professors and associates in the university. The new advertisement adds 40 more. The Vice Chancellor Prof. Thapa conveyed that the program has commenced and is functioning. This arrangement is unequivocal and amalgamates grants not only the nationals but also grants and fa-

A new policy to fund Research Assistants internally by associating them to Professors and Associate Professors.

to gain the endowment of the fellowship program. Moreover, the students who have been preferred by their respective professors to guide their research get full waiver on their university fees. This scheme not only manages the entrance number of research companions in the departments and schools but also bolsters the post graduate programs of the departments and the schools. Post Graduation expenses accounts to be highest in Phd in Biotechnology, Rs. 7.35 lakhs and least on MS by research, Rs. 3.95 lakhs. Students receiving the fellowships need not pay their university fees. The provision additionally wants 10 hours of work in a week and serve the department or respective school from the candidates who receive the fellowship.

Deputy spokesperson of the university Prof. Uddhav Pyakhurel, in the executive council of the university on 28th of Jyestha acknowledged the provision has advanced and assured that

cilitates the international students who are being scholarly trained in the university. The admission of foreign students will subsequently grant them additional facilities and aptitudes of local residence as well if requested by their corresponding supervisors.

This arrangement is projected to boost up the research activities in such departments that are being loosely funded due to research of such research themes. Likewise, it is expected that this procurement will create a sustainable research environment, quality publications and improve the competence and quality of postgraduate programs.

(A research fellow is a person who is certified for academic research and obtains fellowships from their respective departments and schools. Reckoning upon the level of education, there may be some grades of such fellowships.)

-GCT correspondent

SDG Student Hub Kathmandu University Educating and Taking Actions

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth (SDSN) is an initiative launched by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, with the motive to empower youth globally and to create sustainable development solutions. SDSN Youth educates young people about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and provides opportunities for them to pioneer innovative solutions to address the world's biggest challenges. The SDG Students Program is a project of SDSN Youth that aims to engage students in higher education in the global effort to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as well as empower them with the knowledge, skills, and pathways to action to be effective agents of change today.

Over the course of 3 years, SDG Student Hub KU has organized and conducted almost 11 awareness sessions covering several SDGs, ranging from economics, women's health to LGBTQI rights. Besides educational and awareness sessions provided by experts, the Hub has also been actively engaging in collective community actions. One of the most remarkable actions was the

donation and physical engagement in Helpless Disabled Children Promotion Center Nepal. The Hub members raised some amount from their Dashain earnings for the noble cause which was spent towards purchasing daily essential items. In addition, the Hub members were able to donate winter clothes for the children.

Regardless of the harsh pandemic, The SDG Student Hub KU managed to pull off its main agenda of educating about SDGs; this effort was acknowledged and appreciated by the SDSN team. Furthermore, the Hub has been a frequent platform to explore opportunities by the members. Some members have succeeded in participating in The Global Summit, Vatican Youth Symposium and Hackathon.

All in all, SDG Student Hub has been accommodating for the students to internalize sustainable development, explore various opportunities and build a strong network over different schools of Kathmandu University and connect with motivated similar minded individuals globally.

-GCT Correspondent

CONVERSATION WITH Prof. Dr. Bal Chandra Luitel

On June 29th, Green Club of Thoughts had taken an interview with Prof. Dr. Bal Chandra Luitel to discuss the education scenario of Nepal and how it can be improved while addressing current challenges.

- **The lockdown exposed how vulnerable our education system is. What do you think have been the major takeaways from this time?**

There is a social misconception that certificates dictate education. In reality, education has layers beyond just certification that includes consciousness and culture. Unfortunately, our education system is limited to the four walls of a classroom and is highly dependent on lectures and rote memorization.

In addition to traditional methods being debunked, the ritualization of education has been proven inefficient by the pandemic. Ever since the establishment of Durbar High School, we began ritualizing education. Learning during these circumstances showed us that teaching is a flexible process and varies according to the individual. Education is most effective when it is research-oriented yet open-ended. While this may seem paradoxical, it can be achieved if we shed our rigid and largely ineffective system.

- **We've seen students relying on lectures from various online platforms more than their actual classes. Why do you think this is, and how can this be addressed?**

The onus here falls on our teachers. Inadequate preparation and a lack of in-depth exploration of the topic being taught creates a disconnect between the teachers and students, where the students do not feel justified by the teacher's teaching.

The newer generation will and should always be ahead of us in terms of technology and resource optimization. Instead of considering this a problem, teachers should address the lack of effort in their material, and update their work accordingly. However, we have to acknowledge that the needs of modern learning and dynamic education cannot be addressed by a single teacher. This can be tackled by implementing the STEAM education system, which allows for the arts and sciences to be combined; resulting in a coexistence of creativity and technical knowledge.

In addition, technology has also streamlined learning in that educational materials are now just one click away. So anything students are taught is already available online. This availability can itself work as an evaluative tool of the teacher's material of efficiency and originality.

- **What do you think is most ineffective about our existing curriculum? Do you think STEAM as a system can address it? How?**

The schooling system tries to put everything in its curriculum, regardless of how advanced, technical, or difficult the subject is to the student. Schools teach optional mathematics starting from grade eight. There are so many complaints from the students saying that introducing the material at such a young age, made it difficult to grasp. That is the same with science. Rather than submerging these students into these vast pools of technicalities, schools are recommended to focus on and teach particular subjects well.

Another field where the schooling system is lacking is visualization. Learning is mostly about imagination, not mere rote learning. Not many schools have understood that. Visualization can be applied to technical subjects, which we are currently trying to conduct in the Nepalese Master's program. We are logically active in this field, coordinating international resources to make the educational system more interactive. This pedagogy that we are advocating for has even been recognized by the government. The only thing left is its extensive implementation.



- **If we look at our education system, it has been the same for hundreds of years. What can be the reason? STEAM education is said to be the solution to this problem, what is it and why has it not been implemented?**

If we look at education on a global scale, it is a slowly evolving process. Since education is intertwined with tradition, culture, and the conscience of the people, it cannot be changed overnight. There is a saying, "Education is the process that comes out of our unconsciousness".

After the popularity of the internet and technology, the interpretation of an academic has changed drastically. Previously, an academic was the one to gather and store a lot of information and principles. But, all that information and principles can easily be accessed through the internet. Thus, visualizing, analyzing, and solving a real-world problem defines today's academics. STEAM education is the use of technology to produce competent academics. Besides, today's global problems and issues require solutions from interdisciplinary actions which is an important aspect of STEAM.

After 2007/2008, the importance of arts was understood as its infiltration could be found in every practical aspect of life. The previously recognized STEM was now reintroduced as STEAM, which has content on the base level, then context, above it integration, and on the top is transdisciplinary. STEAM is an educational approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. Although we know STEAM is the need of our education system, still, it is hard to implement. The deep-rooted traditional learning methods are easier than the problem-based learning approach because, for the latter, the whole system required a change.

To implement STEAM, we should get rid of our traditional teaching methods. We should identify the problems, focus on the relevant ones and try to find the solution. This is challenging for teachers since they have to make the problem engaging. This requires effort from all sides- government, faculty, teachers, students, and parents. Since our socio-political, economic, and technological conscience developed before educational conscience, we are facing difficulty in implementing a new system. We are still inclined to the 17th-century understanding about education and prioritizing exams. All these issues can be addressed by STEAM, therefore we must implement it.

- **Our system perceives developing education as developing the schools. But according to STEAM, education should not be constricted within classrooms. Is this perhaps our flaw? What is your perception?**

This is true to some extent. School is principally the place through which education can be expounded. However, developing a school is not just about developing its building or getting better teachers. We need to look at what is within. We need to work on how to make the teaching environment better. School is more of a learning center than a teaching center. There should be the application of pedagogies that work. There needs to be conduction of maker's space, workshops, and collaborative group works. There should be enough resources present within the classroom. Examples of this could be mini-libraries and interactive charts. The result of teaching should not be graded. It should be what the students learn.



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- **What projects is KUSOED working on to promote STEAM education? How can the local governments contribute to making STEAM education successful?**

The Steam education department in KUSOED has Master's, Mphil, and Ph.D. programs. People working with our department are active in research fields. All the research works are done at the community level: understanding the society and constructing conclusions. We also have a Mphil student constructing a school garden in Dhapcha, Kavre. This project might seem like a science project but it has many dimensions to it. With the help of the garden, we can teach students about arts, mathematics, and engineering also. This project has been 50% completed. The local government there has also taken a liking to this and has given assurance of constructing school gardens in other 10-15 schools of the community.

Ward offices of various municipalities have also taken the initiative to change the local education scenarios. Since the local government has the authority to draft laws that will fall according to the constitution, promoting STEAM education should not be difficult. The local bodies should work with academics parallelly to make the initiation a success. Local authorities can also uplift the standard of teachers from their locality. They can conduct seminars and workshops, target the teachers, and demonstrate how to practice problem-based learning in their classes. The government should help provide the resources students may need to continue their research and practical learning.

- **There is a misconception amongst people that a STEAM education pursuer is well adept in the field of coding, drawing, physics, and even math, which not everyone is. What do you say in this matter?**

The aforementioned subjects are technical. This field is more about practical knowledge rather than technical knowledge. STEAM should be associated with the public, as it deals with making a practical workforce. Sure, core engineering and mathematics are important, but life learning is necessary for its implementation in the real world. Philosophy, for example, is both sciences as well as arts. It deals with observation, and why a certain thing functions the way it does. Philosophy looks at a matter through artistic perception. STEAM, therefore, is not a subject, but an approach. It enhances the applicability of other technical subjects.

- **University studies at the current situation seem tedious, with very little research-gauging as well as project orientation. What can we do to make this education system more effective?**

We need to give importance to interdisciplinary collaboration. Share insights of one discipline with the other. That will promote effectiveness, as it will promote real-world application. There also needs to be a department mediator present, which there currently is not. We need to break away from the dominant module that we currently have. Unwillingness to collaborate with other subjects is so 17th century. Collaboration of subjects along with the establishment of scholarly seminars should be present. I greatly endorse the transdisciplinary approach if we are to move forward as a university.

- **In Nepal, everything comes down to evaluation. If the STEAM learning system is implemented, how can this be done?**

There should be an authentic assessment. What is meant by this is that while a student may show that they know, they should also be able to apply that knowledge. This is also called product-based learning. How does the student bring out the product? What process do they use to get it? How do they use it? Teachers look at these questions along with the STEAM sector for an evaluation. Rather than formulas, students should be evaluated based on their creative solutions. We must change the paradigm of our traditional assessment into one that is continuous, and one that helps development.

- **What are the grounds that make a person well adept in the field of STEAM? How are their skills different from an average student?**

There are various attributes for STEAM. The important one is that they convert the problem that is asked into a concept. The other is that they have solution-driven thinking. A person is qualified under STEAM if they can look at an idea alternatively, coming up with multiple solutions to a singular problem. They have both divergent as well as convergent thinking. These are both the attributes as well as the qualifications of this field.

- **STEAM is being criticized as it touches subjects like Science and mathematics cosmetically. All the innovations and technologies today are based on the foundation set by the first principle. If we change our teaching to be more STEAM-like, will this become an obstacle to innovations?**

When we talk about STEAM education, we also talk about the context of the nation. In Nepal, there is a need for economic reformation and growth. Also, if we look at our students, they are subjected to rote memorization and bad teaching. This does not fuel intuition rather this deprives the students to enjoy the benefits of applications of science. We also believe that the teaching and learning processes should be made simple. The complex topic of various subjects can be simplified with help of STEAM. So STEAM will not be the obstacle, rather it will promote innovation by building intuition. Since not every one of us is interested in science or mathematics and would want to learn the application of the topic rather than understand its core, STEAM education will not hamper any new research. The person who is interested in core concepts will not and should not be affected by STEAM learning.

- **In an article published in American affairs journal the writer Jared Woodard says: "it increases economic inequality, decreases school accountability, makes poorer students more vulnerable to threats from automation", referring to STEAM education. If this is true, won't STEAM education act as a political weapon?**

STEAM education has different lines: economic rationalism and critical transformation are two of them. The later line criticizes all the unwarranted lines of STEAM and we should practice the later line of STEAM education. So, we should not compromise human's and the planet's wellbeing at any cost. We should focus and prioritize more on the ethical side of STEAM.

STEAM technology doesn't just refer to computers and electronic devices. Technology is used to broaden society itself. STEAM focuses on scientific literacy and not just blind adaptation of technologies. This also rules out the danger of technology being used as a digital divide.

- **While appearing to be of international standard, we have found Kathmandu University to lack that standard when it comes to its students and resources. What are your views on this statement, and who do you think is responsible for this disparity?**

The responsibility of making the education platform thrive lies with both the teacher and the student. There is a need for balance and mutual understanding along with maximum utilization of available technology.

Indeed, resources are incredibly important for learning. Physical structure, laboratories, and libraries are crucial for a student. KU was able to identify that very early and now boasts Nepal's first department dedicated to biotechnology. Regrettably, growth along this field has been stagnant. Our administration needs to look at how to bring more useful resources, plans to be implemented, for the best outcome.

However, technology and infrastructure are not the only requirements to achieve international standards. What is most important is the availability of interdisciplinary education, a proper learning environment, and genuine, inquisitive learning. At this point, department heads and deans should work with teachers to make this teaching pedagogy as interactive and as effective as possible.

That availability of interdisciplinary education is what truly makes international universities stand out. They do not restrict their students to one particular field, encourage critical, as well as creative thinking along with problem identification. They do not limit their learning to assigned texts, but instead, they find their own answers and modify the ones that have already been found. To truly achieve international standards, we too must implement this.

We accept that the KU administration had overlooked this issue, but we are working on it now and will be prioritizing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in all our schools.

- **As an educational institution, where do you think the University's strength lie, and how do you think we can harness this to become a finer institution?**

At Kathmandu University, our biggest asset are our students. When these students are committed to learning, and when the university fully utilizes its infrastructural abilities and resources, the university will certainly thrive. The implementation of STEAM with youth from multiple disciplines actively participating in the system will truly harness not just ours, but the potential of all our universities.

Prof Dr. Bal Chandra Luitel is a transformative education researcher at Kathmandu University. He was one of the three nominees for the post of the vice chancellor of Kathmandu University. Prof. Luitel is also a KU-Senate member and advisor for KU VC office.

GCT ORGANIZES A WEBINAR ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID 19

The unusual magnitude of the Covid 19 pandemic, as well as the mysteries surrounding it have required innovative approaches to tackle it. In an attempt to spread awareness of the situation, Green Club of Thoughts (GCT) organized a webinar on "Socio-economic impact of Covid 19 and The future Course of Nepal." The guest speakers of this webinar were Dr. Prakash Kumar Shrestha (Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance, GON) and Dr. Sameer Mani Dixit (General Secretary, Nepal Public Health Foundation), and was moderated by Ms. Pratistha Pokharel.

The webinar addressed how the country has been battling the worst health situations while responding to COVID-19 with a poor health care system. The webinar also highlighted how Nepal is starting to suffer the most abrupt and widespread cessation of economic activity due to the outbreak of this virus.

The Health System of Nepal is facing several critical challenges at this stage in the COVID-19 outbreak. The general public of Nepal has been revolting against the system to get quality health care during the current pandemic, which calls for countermeasures to ensure that quality healthcare is provided. Nepal is witnessing a decline in asymptomatic cases and increasing symptomatic cases as a result of increased transmission and changes in testing policy. Hospitals have had to increase their capacity, not only in terms of beds but also in terms of oxygen, oxygen perfusion monitoring, additional ICU capacity, and ventilators to treat severe patients.

According to Dr. Dixit, the need for resources is growing as the pandemic worsens. Because there is a shortage of accessible and reliable information for families, individuals are ignorant of the Covid-19 hazards and the need to protect themselves by getting tested and vaccinated. People in rural areas and urban slums do not have access to clean

water, soap, or masks, which presents significant risks to them. The crisis, illness, mortality, and seclusion have made the people more vulnerable as a collective.

One of our biggest challenges today is scale, and antigen testing is one way to assist with that. The convenience of rapid testing, their ability to be distributed widely throughout a community, and their ability to provide results in a short period make it a powerful tool for controlling outbreaks in areas where viruses are prevalent. Self-quarantining is possible within minutes of taking the test, rather than waiting days for lab results, and potentially infecting others at that time, which could help curb COVID-19's spread. The government of Nepal failed to take safety measures for covid even after seeing India's situation. Although we should have been prepared for the 2nd wave of COVID by March, due to the mismanaged system we are still underprepared. "This resulted in an escalation of COVID cases throughout the country", said Dr. Sameer Mani Dixit. He explained an imperative need for planning and preparedness for the next phase of the COVID outbreak, as many countries have reported focal clusters of cases in their communities leading to the rapid escalation of the situation. In this regard, the country must plan and be prepared for a boom in a public health-care capacity. A handful of them include active surveillance, expanded testing, as well as contact tracing, isolation, and management of cases. It is imperative that we effectively mobilize and utilize the field epidemiology workforce to enhance the nation's capacity for surveillance and outbreak investigation.

Furthermore, he argued, while there has been a decline in cases, our mobility issues persist. Many people, including newborns and pregnant mothers, have undoubtedly suffered from a long lockdown, as have patients receiving dialysis. Dr. Dixit, upon comparing



Dr. Sameer Mani Dixit
General Secretary
Nepal Public Health Foundation



Dr. Prakash Kumar Shrestha
Economic Advisor
Ministry of Finance, GON

the data from May 11th to June 8th and presented a threefold drop in cases.

Dr. Prakash Kumar Shrestha, our other keynote speaker, touched on the macroeconomic factors and indicators that were impacted by the pandemic. Beginning with the virus and the lockdown measures, he stated that the economy contracted in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, as well as industrial and production sectors, curtailing the economic growth rate from 6.39 % to 2.12 %. As a survey of Nepal Rastra Bank states, 25% of Nepalese lost their source of livelihood and he clarified that only small fractions of the business sectors were completely closed, largely amassing the travel and tourism sector which worsened in the second wave.

The inflation from 6.7% before the pandemic went down to 3.14% by the mid of April due to suppressed demand in the marketplace. By the flow of remittances, the deposit growth inflated, and the private sector credit growth depleted by 40%, which also declined the interest rate. There has been a substantial increase in the digital payment system which attributes to QR-based payments and Mobile Banking. The scheme of import and export initially declined in the first quarter of the initial wave, and again in the second wave. In the same order, remittances decreased and hit the lowest (Rs. 3.45 billion) in April 2020, which later harmonized at its initial pace. The government's revenue started hitting low and expenditure heightened which later stabilized after the ease of the lockdown. Owing to the digital mode

of transaction, the stock market worked as normal.

Dr. Shrestha said that the pandemic gave a mixed impact on the nation's economy which pointed to lower economic growth rates, inflation and external sector remained satisfactory, digital payment and the stock market expanded, lower interest rate and credit growth rate revival.

Toward the strategies to be implemented regarding economic growth, Dr. Shrestha rudimentarily focused on health to save people's lives. Agriculture and hunger should be prioritized, since food is an imperative factor for survival even during the pandemic.

Digital marketing can be used to expand businesses in a new way which has been seen by many ventures during the lockdown period. To effectuate the effective implementation of the annual budget, the relief and recovery system must be strengthened following health protocols. All economic activities must function swiftly. Lastly, Dr. Shrestha quotes that "Vaccination for All" must be the primary agenda of the government after which we can proceed further for sustainable development.

The webinar highlighted that lockdown should not be our government's first line of defense against the pandemic, rather it highlighted the need for standardized immunization.

- GCT Correspondent

GCT hosted A Summer School on Advanced Molecular Dynamics Simulation

Green Club of Thoughts(GCT) along with the Department of Physics, Kathmandu University and Department of Chemistry, IISER Pune, India has organized a two-week long summer school on advanced molecular dynamics simulation starting from July 5th. The top experts of the field have provided both the concepts and application of molecular dynamics simulation through specialized classes, hands-on tutorial sessions and guest lectures. One hundred and fifty six early career faculties, PostDocs, graduate students and young researchers from 12 different countries and more than 30 different institutions including Kathmandu University Nepal, Indian Institute of Technology India, University of Casablanca Morocco, University of Technology MARA Malaysia, Sogang University South Korea, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK) Japan and United Arab Emirates University UAE have participated.

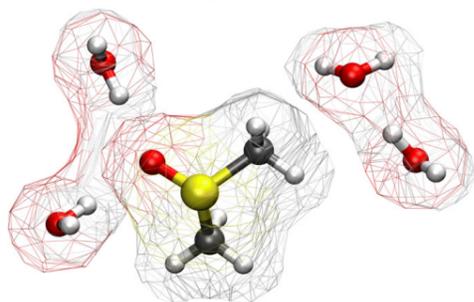


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Thirteen eminent professors of the field including Prof. Narayan Adikari from Nepal, Prof. Alexander D. MacKerell Jr. from USA, Prof. Arnab Mukherjee from India and Prof. Nolan Kane from University of Colorado, Boulder, USA have provided specialized classes. Similarly, fifteen teaching assistants from Raman Research Institute, IIT Bombay, CU-SAT, Kathmandu University, ICTP Italy and other organizations have facilitated hands-on sessions.

Welcoming the participants Prof. Mukherjee enlightened the importance of the school on the field of molecular dynamics, and its impacts for early career researchers. The school has offered access to HPC facilities (both CPU and GPU) for the following month to familiarize and train with the concepts taught in the school.

- GCT Correspondent

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Constitutional Crisis: What next?

Nepal is often quoted as the 'playground for testing constitution', with the Constitution of Nepal 2072 being the seventh constitution in roughly 70 years. The political instability has caused Nepal's government systems to change frequently in the past 70 years, from autocracy, constitutional monarchy, Panchayat system, multi-party democracy, to finally a federal democratic republic of the people.

The Constitution of Nepal 2072 was promulgated with the hope for Nepal to finally fulfill its aspirations for sustainable peace, good governance, development and prosperity through federal, democratic, republican system of governance. However, Nepal has been facing difficulties in achieving the set out promise. The then Prime Minister (PM), KP Sharma Oli, issued in a press release a document which stated that the future of the country's democratic system may be in crisis. For the PM elected with a landslide majority that had never seen in Nepal's long, disturbed political history, after 10 years of armed revolution to achieve democracy, it was not a small statement. How did we reach here? To address this, we must go back and scrutinize the history of Nepal, not just the current political establishment but back to the People's Movement I, when Nepal reintroduced multiparty democracy along with the Constitution of Nepal 2047.

After the promulgation of the Constitution of 2047, Nepalese people finally got back their representation in the matters of administration through multiparty democracy. This also meant that the monarch, now, did not have the authoritative power to command the government to run the country. The PM was the head of the executive, whereas the monarch remained as the head of the state and the protector of the Constitution. The Constitution held many provi-

sions such as fundamental rights for the people, but one minor mistake was made in the powers of the legislature and the PM. The Constitution stated that the PM had the prerogative right to dissolve the parliament anytime his authority was challenged, as long as the King of Nepal approves it. This right was given to the PM since he/she would presumably be more accountable for the well-being of the parliament and the nation. However, this was not the case. In less than 20 years of the promulgation of the Constitution of 2047, the parliament was dissolved three times; first by former PM Deuba, second by former PM Late GP Koirala, and again by PM Deuba on the recommendation of the King. This did not just cause havoc in the political system of Nepal, but it caused a very horrifying political instability.

After the Peoples' Movement II 2062/63, the monarchy system in Nepal was overthrown and the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 was the main guide for the future of the country. The Interim Constitution held provisions for a new Constitution of Nepal within the next 4 years of its promulgation under the supervision of the Constituent Assembly (CA), which was not successful. In 2072 CAII finally was able to construct the Constitution of Nepal, which is now the supreme law of the land. The Constitution of Nepal 2072 has new provisions, which included a federal system, republican system, democracy, inclusiveness, and many more. However, due to obvious reasons, one provision was left out on purpose which was the prerogative right of the PM to dissolve the House of Representatives (HoR). In fact, the Constitution was so strict about this that, even though dissolving the HoR was possible, it had to be done following certain protocols.

There is only one way the dissolution of the HoR can be successful.

According to Article 76, there are 4 different ways to elect a Prime Minister or government in the constitution; with Majority, with Coalition, Party with Majority in the House and Member who can obtain the Vote of Confidence. If even after these 3 ways are applied and the elected PM does not get the vote of confidence, only then can the dissolution of the House be suggested. The suggestion is forwarded to the President who has two options as the Head of State. One to approve the suggestion and announce another election within 6 months, second to hold the decision and seek counsel from the Supreme Court, and check whether or not the suggestion is constitutional. As we know the President did not seek counsel from the Supreme Court, however, the Supreme Court intervened in this matter and declared the dissolution of the HoR unconstitutional. This meant that unless the PM did not get the Vote of Confidence the HoR could not be dissolved.

To this, the PM was not successful in getting the Vote of Confidence. However, the result for this vote was withdrawn the very next day by the opposition parties led by Prachanda. This meant that the PM still was unsuccessful in dissolving the HoR and was still the PM. Later that week the President appointed the already appointed PM under Article 76(5), without any consent from anyone. There is an ethical mistake that has been made here. Can a new PM (even if s/he is the same person) be appointed when there is already a PM? The answer is NO. This, followed by the PM's ignorance of the oath mentioned in the Constitution's text has caused much disarray among the Nepalese people. Not just that, the majority of the people believe that the President is inclined to her political party, which in itself is unconstitutional since the President is the guardian of the Constitution and has pledged not to support any party. All this caused the opposition to petition writs in the Supreme Court, which formed the Constitutional bench under Article 137 which was also a huge mess, since the advocates found that the bench formed

was not neutral to both parties. This led to the formation of another Constitutional bench, headed by the Chief Justice himself.

Constitution and Constitutionalism go hand in hand in a country where the rule of law is to be uplifted. Rule of law means that there is no arbitrary power vested in anyone, and that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law. The current happenings of Nepal have broken the trust of many Nepalese people. Moreover, it had clearly breached the Constitution. There may be Constitutions in many countries, but only those Constitutions have been successful where Constitutionalism and rule of law has been uplifted.

Thanks to the power of the Supreme Court, Nepalese Constitution has been rightly safeguarded by the hands of venomous politicians. The latest update from the Supreme Court has proven that the Constitutional provision of Judicial Review will not be under the influence of any political party, and that the Supreme Court truly belongs to the people of Nepal. The Supreme Court ended the Constitutional crisis by declaring the actions of PM Oli void, and has appointed Sher B. Deuba as the new PM. The Supreme Court has thus proven that Nepalese Constitutional provisions will not bend for anyone, and Nepalese judiciary is indeed independent and sovereign. The landmark decision of the Supreme Court has thus ended the historic Constitutional case of Nepal which will be commemorated for generations. Nepal was facing a huge Constitutional crisis, and many Nepalese had little faith in the government. The Supreme Court has successfully cleared our doubts on this matter, and has given us a clear picture that no one shall, here on out, ever cause any harm to the Constitution, but most importantly, the people of Nepal.

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How the international community **FAILED PALESTINE**

On the day before the end of Ramadan, when the entire Arab population was celebrating their holiest time of the year, Israel launched a savage attack, like they've done countless times in the past, in the form of an air raid directly targeting the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood; this time killing at least 139 people, including 39 children and 22 women, injuring more than 950.

This attack broke the dam to a flood of international outrage mostly thanks to Twitter. Along with the outraged cries for justice, we found ourselves confronted with a new question. What happens when the moderators of the public sphere are themselves invested in an agenda?

What becomes of world peace when the institutions promoting them are themselves perpetrators of violence?

Let us explore with a case study of Palestine and Israel.

The establishment of the Palestinian state- or the official declaration at least, was not a pressing need until the invasion of the Gaza strip by Israel, rearing its head as a threat to Palestinian sovereignty.

The start of the conflict takes us back to 1917 when Britain, with the promise that "Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish migration" seized Palestine from the Ottomans and through the Balfour Declaration gives support to a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

Come 1945, after mass Jewish immigration into the area, The first suggestion of an internationally controlled Jerusalem arrived in 1947 from the UN, divvying up the rest of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states.

With the end of the British mandate the following year, Israel hastily de-

clared independence and was immediately admitted to the United Nations as a legitimate state. UN partiality begins here, and it's effects have continued to ripple throughout.

The first consequence of such an endorsement from a body such as the UN was the First Arab-Israeli war, where Palestine paid dearly in both people and land. Around 750,000 Palestinian Arabs either fled or were expelled out of their total population of about 1,200,000.

Now an official nation, Israel needed trade routes that they could control, if not befriend. The UN (again) helped by setting up buffer forces in Sinai and Gaza and allowing Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal.

Soon after the French withdraw their military aid to an already trigger happy Israel, the United States swooped in to fill that void on grounds of "improving relations and concerns about the Middle Eastern balance of power", apparently deciding that the best way to do so was by supplying Israel with missiles. Israel continued its bloody pursuit of ethnic cleansing and encroachment, but now with American endorsement, as it still is.

However, with the dawn of the 1990s, Israel began its redemption arc or so it seemed. In the December of 1994 AD, then prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, then chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation Yasser Arafat, and then Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres jointly received the Nobel Peace Prize, for deigning to begin the peace process after years of illegal settlements and violence.

But hopes of peace were short-lived, as, after the assassination of Rabin by an orthodox Jewish extremist, Israel saw the rise of Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996, who immediately pledged to halt further concessions to Palestinians, and resumed settlement expansions; und-

ing every good thing Rabin had done for the peace process. The cycle thus continued, peace never lasting for longer than a year.

With the advent of the 2000s, the conflict took a more sinister turn. Small sieges and forces of hand became large scale terrorist attacks. In 2002, the Israeli army launched Operation Defensive Shield on West Bank after a spate of Palestinian suicide bombings.

It was the largest military operation on West Bank since 1967.

Israel also began building a barrier in and around the West Bank, allegedly aimed to stop Palestinian attacks. Palestinians see it as a tool to grab more land. It was only in 2004 that the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion that the West Bank barrier is illegal.

The "two-state solution" that we debate so much today was borne out of desperation at these continuous acts of deliberate and violent ethnic cleansing. For the first time, the Annapolis Conference established the "two-state solution" as a basis for future talks between Israel and Palestinian Authorities, but to no avail.

In December 2008, Israel launched a devastating month-long full-scale invasion of Gaza, "to prevent Hamas and other groups from launching rockets".

Over the years, multiple negotiations were attempted by both sides. Authorities and representatives changed, but the outcome remained the same. Inconclusive.

In 2016, just as Israel suspended peace talks with the EU over another petty feud, the US agreed on the largest military aid package in US history, worth \$38b over the next 10 years for Israel. The previous pact, set to expire in 2018, had seen Israel get \$3.1bn annually.

With American backing, Israel

continues to be petulant at best, murderous at worst. It suspended working ties with 12 countries that voted for a Security Council resolution condemning settlement building. To nobody's surprise, the US (for the first time) abstained from the vote rather than using its veto.

Tensions reached the boiling point in December 2017 when former US President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

The following March, he recognises Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 war and later annexed.

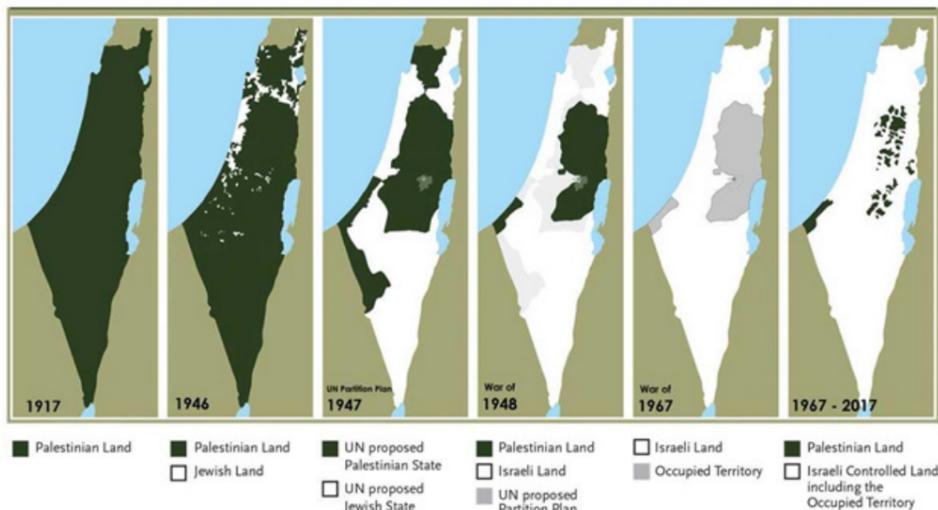
In 2019, the US said it no longer considers Israeli settlements on the West Bank to be illegal.

For the better part of 2018, the UN and Egypt attempted to broker a long-term ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, amidst an unsurprising upsurge in violence on the Gaza border from March. These attempts went as well as they had been going for the last 80 years. Something to consider here is that all these (failed) peace negotiations had involved the United Nations.

Come 2021, one of the apparent perpetrators of these invasions, Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who had been holding on to his seat of power since 1996 was charged, tried and found guilty of bribery, fraud and breach of trust in connection with three separate cases. Not a word about the ethnic cleansing and war crimes.

Recent aggressive actions by Israeli forces against peaceful protesters and worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque, are the latest and more urgent evidence of an unchecked institution. But with the fall of the Netanyahu oligarchy, we are faced with new questions; how will this affect the ongoing displacement of Palestinians from their homes and the violence going on in Sheikh Jarrah? A ceasefire took effect on May 21, 2021, but the long-running campaign by Jewish settlers to expel Palestinians from their homes still Israel continues.

These activities are just a glorified version of the encroachment and settlements in the past, all of which had



been re-started by Netanyahu. With his fall from power, does the Arab world have reason to hope? Is there peace on

the horizon?

While US endorsement is directly damning to the people of

Palestine, the silence and inaction from the larger international community also speak volumes. The world was swift to notice but also equally swift to forget the forced dispossession of Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, including families living in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, and the 72,000 displaced Palestinians in Gaza who must also survive the ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by a 14-year blockade. They cannot afford to simply be content with hope.

It can be noted with great concern here that the UN has been involved in almost all major actions taken in relevance with Israel and Palestine. The UN, of whom the United States of America is a permanent member with veto privileges. The United Nations, whose largest financial backer incidentally happens to

be the United States. The United States who have been highly biased towards Israel since day one.

Not only does this make the information coming through the UN and American news teams highly unreliable, but their validity is also compromised. This reduces the power of the public sphere, and also calls for a level of media literacy and awareness from the audience that they may not possess. Now more than ever we see the need for individual vigilance and voices to be heard- for silence now will mean aiding and abetting a genocide; and even when institutions fail, it is individuals that truly make a difference. Save Palestine.

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GOOD GOVERNANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination. International human rights law lays down the obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

“ States should provide an effective remedy to individuals when their rights are violated, and provide a fair and effective judicial or administrative mechanism for the determination of individual rights or the violation. ”

There is no single and exhaustive definition of “good governance,” that commands universal acceptance. The term is used with great flexibility; this is an advantage, but also a source of some difficulty at the operational level. Depending on the context and the overriding objective sought, good governance has been said at various times to encompass: full respect of human rights, the rule of law, effective participation, multi-actor partnerships, political pluralism, transparent and accountable processes and institutions, an efficient and effective public sector, legitimacy, access to knowledge, information and education, political empowerment of people,

equity, sustainability, attitudes and values that foster responsibility, solidarity and tolerance. It has been said that good governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. The true test of “good” governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

The key attributes of good governance:

- Transparency
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Participation
- Responsiveness

• How Human rights and good governance are related?

Good governance and human rights are mutually reinforcing. Human rights principles provide a set of values to guide the work of governments and other political and social actors. They also provide a set of performance standards against which these actors can be held accountable. Moreover, human rights principles inform the content of good governance efforts: they may inform the development of legislative frameworks, policies, programmes, budgetary allocations and other measures.

On the other hand, without good governance, human rights cannot be respected and protected in a sustainable manner. The implementation of human rights relies on a conducive and enabling environment. This includes appropriate legal frameworks and institutions as well as political, managerial and administrative processes responsible for responding to the rights and needs of the population.

The links between good governance and human rights can be organized around four areas:

1. Democratic institutions

When led by human rights values,

good governance reforms of democratic institutions create avenues for the public to participate in policy making either through formal institutions or informal consultations. They also establish mechanisms for the inclusion of multiple social groups in decision-making processes, especially locally. Finally, they may encourage civil society and local communities to formulate and express their positions on issues of importance to them.

2. Service delivery

In the realm of delivering state services to the public, good governance reforms advance human rights when they improve the state’s capacity to fulfil its responsibility to provide public goods which are essential for the protection of a number of human rights, such as the right to education, health and food. Reform initiatives may include mechanisms of accountability and transparency, culturally sensitive policy tools to ensure that services are accessible and acceptable to all, and paths for public participation in decision-making.

3. Rule of law

When it comes to the rule of law, human rights-sensitive good governance initiatives reform legislation and assist institutions ranging from penal systems to courts and parliaments to better implement that legislation. Good governance initiatives may include advocacy for legal reform, public awareness-raising on the national and international legal framework, and capacity-building or reform of institutions.

4. Anti-Corruption

In fighting corruption, good governance efforts rely on principles such as accountability, transparency and participation to shape anti-corruption measures. Initiatives may include establishing institutions such as anti-corruption commissions, creating mechanisms of information sharing, and monitoring governments’ use of public funds and implementation of policies.

From a human rights perspective, the concept of good governance can be linked to principles and rights set out in the main international human rights instruments. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the importance of a participatory government and article 28 states that

everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration can be fully realized. The two International Covenants on Human Rights contain language that is more specific about the duties and role of governments in securing the respect for and realization of all human rights. Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights requires states parties to respect and to ensure the rights recognized in the Covenant and to take the necessary steps to give effect to those rights. In particular, states should provide an effective remedy to individuals when their rights are violated, and provide a fair and effective judicial or administrative mechanism for the determination of individual rights or the violation thereof. Under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, states are obliged to take steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant by all appropriate means.

The human rights treaty monitoring bodies have given some attention to the different elements of good governance. In general comment No. 12, on the right to food, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated that “Good governance is essential to the realization of all human rights, including the elimination of poverty and ensuring a satisfactory livelihood for all.” The Committee on the Rights of the Child has on several occasions addressed the issue of governments’ capacity to coordinate policies for the benefit of the child and the issue of decentralization of services and policy-making. It has also addressed corruption as a major obstacle to the achievement of the Convention’s objectives. The Human Rights Committee generally addresses issues related to the provision of adequate remedies, due process and fair trial in the context of the administration of justice in each state. It regularly emphasizes the importance of independent and competent judges for the adequate protection of the rights set forth in the Convention.

Hence, enforcement of HR and good governance are directly related. If there is good governance then ultimately there will be enforcement, protection and promotion of Human rights.

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Photo Credit : www.theloadstar.com



Mayhem in MYANMAR

Myanmar is caught up in turmoil after the military seized power in a coup d'état on the 1st of February. The quasi-democracy that began in 2011 marked the end of military rule since 1962 through parliamentary elections and other reforms.

Elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi is in detention under trial for seven different charges. Her trial started on 14th June in a closed courtroom. Grave concerns arise as what started as relatively nonviolent protests have turned into bloodshed. According to the advocacy group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Myanmar), more than 863 people, including 58 children, have been killed by the military in anti-coup protests. On March 27th alone, more than 600 people were killed. More than 6,000 people have been arrested, and thousands of others have been assaulted, detained, tortured, or enforced disappearances. Tatmadaw, the Myanmar military, has conducted haphazard raids and even worse, air and ground attacks.

Humanitarian crises have inevitably arisen with violence and COVID-19 engulfing the nation. The population's access to medicine, food, aid and other supplies and services have been cut off. With the solidarity of medical workers in civil disobedience, the healthcare system is in shambles. Let alone vaccinations for COVID-19, even basic medical care is unavailable. Deaths due to otherwise preventable diseases are rising. The banking systems are increasingly disintegrating. Getting any sort of aid into the country has proved to be extremely difficult. All of this is projected to lead to one of the worst hunger crises in the world. Nearly 230,000 people, men, women, and children, have fled their homes since the coup. Many dis-

placed persons are taking shelter in the jungles and are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

The international community has rebuked the junta's actions and has urged it to release the detainees. On 18th June, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the military coup and the violence. Out of 193 member states, with 119 votings in favor of the resolution, Belarus voting against it, and 36 abstained. Nepal too chose to abstain from voting. It has also urged all the member nations to stop the flow of weapons to Myanmar.

Grassroot defense groups have formed all across the country. People have resorted to taking up arms in retaliation against Tatmadaw. Training in basic warfare techniques with firearms and hand grenades has started in the jungles. Protestors are building barricades and learning how to make smoke bombs. Utter agitation and frustration have led to attacks and sabotage of the military using guerilla-type tactics.

The widespread clash between Myanmar military and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) is spiking the numbers of killed and injured civilians, damaging civilian properties, and displacing hundreds of thousands of people. The numbers add on as groups of protesters take up arms. The grievances of Rohingya Muslims haven't yet eased. The pandemic has only worsened the catastrophe. Even though it has been said that the military will hold new elections within the next two years, the public outrage and omnipresent protests with millions of people on the streets depict skepticism and distrust amongst the public.

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“RISING CONCERNS FOR THE UYGHUR MUSLIM MINORITIES IN CHINA”



Photo Credit: scroll.in

The Xinjiang province is located in the Northwest region of China.

This province is an autonomous region which consists of 40 ethnic groups. Although it carries the 'autonomous region' name for itself, Xinjiang presently is heavily controlled by China. Communist party in this area has placed severe surveillance over media, foreign journalists, the internet, and even mobile phones.

Xinjiang consists of the two biggest ethnic groups in China: Uyghur and Han. After such a heavy monitoring, it is certain that most of the happenings within this area does not easily come out evinced, but still, the various news reports, attestations of escaped Uyghurs, and eventual leaked videos give the rest of the world an idea about what is happening in that territory.

The Uyghurs have often protested about being oppressed. The Uyghur muslims and Han ethnic group have been in a state of conflict for decades on religious grounds. In 2014, a bombing at a market and a knife attack at a railway station killed 30 people and injured over 200. For this, as well as most of the violence in the Xinjiang province, China condemned the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which is one of the Uyghur separatist groups present there. Thus, 2014 is when China's attitudes towards the Uyghurs became extreme.

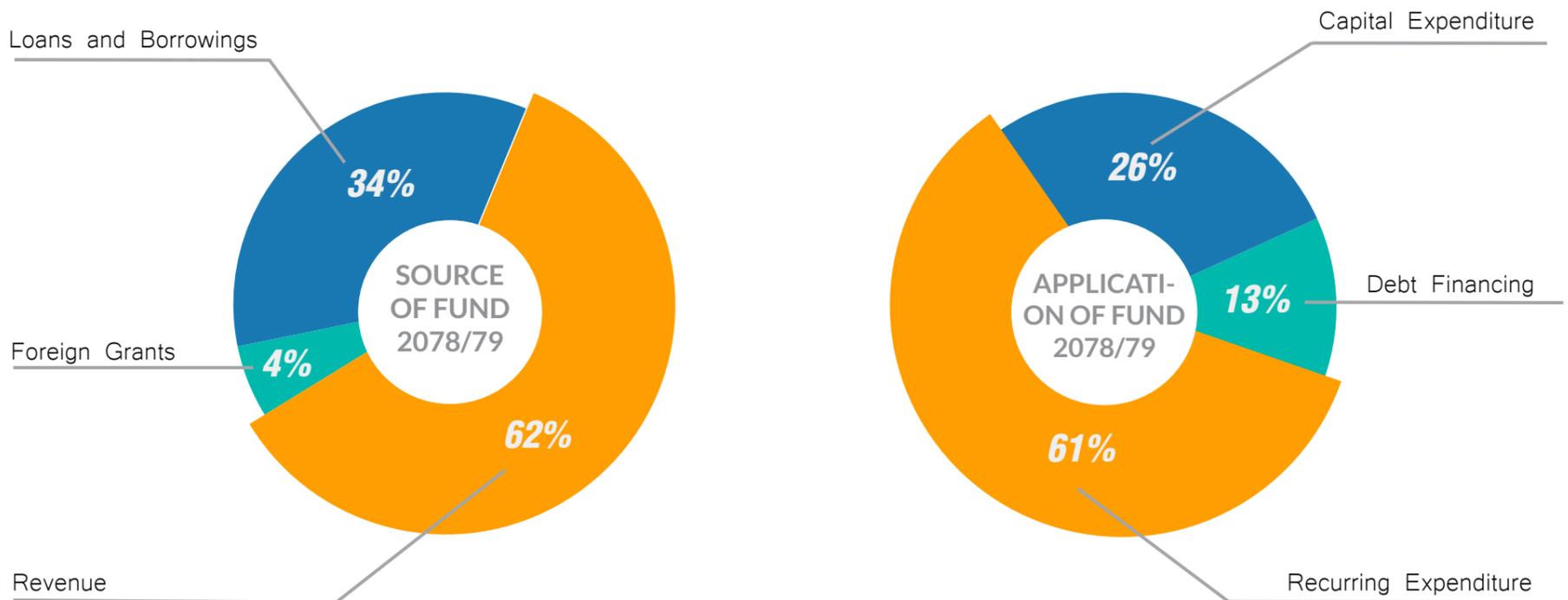
The Chinese authority, for the

same condemnation, did a crackdown on the separatists for years to follow. This included shooting, arrests, and long jail sentences. After 2017, China initiated a thorough repression on these people. They set up police patrols, military checkpoints, and cameras in the Uyghur

denominated areas. In August 2018, the United Human Rights Panel cited its report and stated that the Chinese government has kept over one million Uyghur Muslims in counter-extremism centres, which the Chinese government termed as 'vocational training centres'. China has been denounced by hundreds of Uyghur escapees as well as media outlets who have published ground reports on this matter to participate in the violation of human rights, and the extermination of Uyghur culture and their identity. The Australian Think Tank found evidence of forced labour, children being indoctrinated, and sterilisation of Uyghur women within the training centres.

The Government of China denies any allegations that have been placed upon it about these issues. It states that the actions it has carried out so far is for anti-terrorism and anti-secession. Various social media leaks and media outlet exhibitions say otherwise. At the United Nations, countries such as the US, Denmark, Japan, and Australia have condemned China for the oppression that has been happening against the Uyghurs. The Uyghurs have solicited the International Criminal Court to investigate in this issue, but this is not able to go very far as the ICC has no jurisdiction in China.

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Arrival of the 2078 Budget As a Ray of Hope

1. National Revenue- NPR 1024.90 billion, 62%
2. Loans and Borrowings- NPR 559.29 billion, 34%
3. Foreign Grants- NPR 63.38 billion, 4%

The segmentation of the budget has been on the basis of the following:

- Recurrent expenditure: NPR 678.610 billion, 41.2%
- Capital expenditure: NPR 347.26 billion, 22.7%
- Fiscal transfer: 386.71 billion, 23.5%
- Financial management: 207.97, 12.6%

Unlike the 3.81% decrease witnessed in 2020 due to the arrival of the pandemic, the budget this year increases to 11.73%. The following are the objectives of the budget:

- To protect the life of citizens from COVID-19 pandemic.
- To expedite the pace of economic activities and development programs for reviving the economy at the soonest.
- To enhance the welfare role of the state, to provide social security and protection and to attain prosperity along with social justice.
- To uplift the economy through mobilization of means and resources available with public, private and cooperative sector's productivity.

The priorities of this year's fiscal budget include the extension of provision for treatment and supply of health equipment and materials. It also consists of free vaccination, for which the state has invested NPR 26.75 billion. A 35% increase over the previous budget has been provided for in the Ministry of Health and Population for the development of health infrastructure and effective mobilization of health workers to prevent, control and cure COVID-19. The budget also ensures uplifting the economic activities through relief packages to COVID-19 affected families. It provides incentive, subsidies and reviving packages to private sectors, and warrants job and employment to the entrants in the labor market and laborers who lost jobs due to the pandemic. There is an Increment in agricultural production and productivity along with assurance of food protection for farmers. It promotes construction of infrastructure

having strategic importance which will help in rapid industrialization. Through the budget, the state advances equitable development and justified access on the returns of expansion. It assures its citizens of responsible governance, peace and security, corruption control, and effectiveness on governance and services.

There are several major highlights that this budget brings about that makes it different from other budgets that have been dispatched in the previous years. Free COVID-19 vaccines provided to citizens are one of them. There is a 20% waiver on purchase of basic foodstuff from Food Management and Trading Company Limited during the prohibition period. 100% waiver of electricity charges given to households consuming up to 20 units, 50% waiver on households using up to 120 units and 25% off on using up to 240 units. There is 100% waiver on the drinking water bill for consumers consuming only 20,000

liters per month during the prohibition period. It also promotes income tax exemption for 5 years for a startup company. It offers a loan at 1% interest rate for students buying a laptop. Up to Rs. 2.5 million loans will be given to undergraduate degree holders with education degrees as collateral. Senior citizens allowance has now increased from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,000. All social security allowances are now increased by 33 percent. The Prime Minister Employment Program will be continued and 200,000 jobs will be created. Targeted programs will be launched for income generation for women belonging to deprived communities. Government will buy agricultural produce from farmers, and the budget will be allocated for concessional farmer-loans. Mero Kitta will be used across the country for digital land registration and transfer of land ownership. Light petrol vehicles will be displaced by electric vehicles by 2088 BS. 'Made in Nepal, Make in Nepal' campaign will be launched this year. National identity cards for Nepalese citizens will be available within 2 years.

This budget is different from the ones consigned in the previous year. That is because this budget has been fostered both due to necessity and due to the need to move forward. The arrival of the pandemic in 2020 cost the Nepalese revenue a detrimental 3.81% decrease. The government has taken cardinal commitments in order to save both its citizens as well as the national revenue from the grasp of COVID-19. Some observers were skeptical of whether a fiscal budget can be dispatched with the interim government that we presently have. Due to the paramount necessity of this budget upon the well-being of the people and Nepal as a whole, this budget came about constitutionally through an ordinance. The budget has been able to address matters that have affected the country significantly. It has also been able to trace the pathway that will help Nepal advance towards progress. The next and final thing that will help it obtain its objective is the budget's execution.

-GCT Correspondant

On May 29, 2021, Nepal's Federal budget for fiscal year 2078/79 was dispatched. Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel exhibited the 1.647 trillion budget virtually from Singha Durbar. The implementation of this budget will commence from the 15th of July. For the first time since the drafting of the new constitution, the government has brought a budget through an ordinance. The following is the source of the budget:



Photo credit: Parmeshwar Jha(Nepali Times)
Imnepal.com

Madhesh

Defined by Ethnicity for Equality

"I hereby end my career in the mainstream..." Aadarsh Mishra, a comedian, tweeted about his retirement from mainstream, which was due to the ethnic discrimination from a judge at Comedy Champion, a comedy show, in which he had participated. Aadarsh Mishra recedes from Bara, a district located in the Terai region of Nepal. The Terai region holds a history of various political uprisings and revolts, which have led to significant socio-political transformations in Nepal, among which the spark of the Biratnagar Jute Mill's strike led to a nationwide Satyagraha, ultimately uprooting the entire Rana Regime.(incident of importance of terai)

Later, Terai seemed to be entangled with its own politics for their representation. It turned out to be a complex arena for social, political and geopolitical plays. That's when the term 'Madhesh' was introduced, as mentioned by Jason Milklian in his paper published in 2008. Although both the terms seem alike, yet 'Terai' is used specifically in geographical context whereas 'Madhesh' is preferred as a socio-political terminology. Madheshi is a term used to denote Indo-Aryan people who are settled in the Terai region of Nepal from Indian origins, mostly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar after the 1860's; thus still sharing cultural and linguistic similarity.

As mentioned by Frederick H Gaize in his book "Regionalism and National Unity in Nepal", in 900-500 BC, Aryans from the confluence of Ganges and Jamuna were the early migrants to inhabit, what we today call, the hilly region of Nepal (or simply 'Pahad'). Thus, the people residing in this region utilized the resources, established their native culture and language and obtained political authority in that area. Later when Madheshis arrived to reside, the early settlers dominated them. As per the modern history of Nepal, which is believed to have started after Pritihivi Narayan Shah's annexation of states, it was found that vital political posts, privileges, and power resided on the presumed

upper caste people (mostly residing in the hilly region), their native language and culture. The same inequality that could be seen in distribution of socio-economic and political rights created a base for the red-hot identity revolution which erupted in 1990 as the then Panchayat government harshly dominated the Madhesi people.

The early 1950s had a few politically aware people, continuously educating and awaring the illiterates on the state's domination, inequality and identity issues. In the same period, Bedananda Jha had advocated for the use of native Hindi language as official language through his Nepal-Terai Congress Party. So, the revolution was an outcome of the marginalized who were aware and noticed the series of the state's domination towards them. In 1954, The National Planning Commission made a declaration to make "Nepali", a language to be used for both official works and education, and was amended by the people's government led by BP Koirala, also including Hindi language as an official part of Madhesh in 1959. But, as the autocratic regime reinstated, it took domination to a harsh level. In 1959, king Mahendra introduced "Daura, Suruwal, topi" and nepali language as a significance of Nationality stating "Hamro Bhasa Hamro Bhes Pran Bhand Pyaro Chha". The definition of nationality then was not inclusive enough to address the native tongue and dress of Madheshis, despite having a diverse culture within Nepal. Later, the Citizenship amendment act of 1964 made it mandatory for citizens to speak and write in Nepali in order to obtain citizenship. It barred significant madheshi to obtain land ownership and other political rights and benefits. The resettlement plan of the 1980s addressed Madheshis as migrants and proceeded to finance the Pahadi people to make settlements in Terai, exploiting the resources and further dominating the Madheshi. There has been significant economic inequality between these two groups for a long time. The questioning

and suspicion regarding their nationality is worsened due to the open border between India and Nepal. The unmonitored to and fro travel through the borders have always made the Madhesh the prime concern for the initiation of identity-politics. However, an increase in socio-political awareness among the marginalized people, and the political environment all over the country did fuel the revolution.

After the Constitution of 1990 was promulgated, there was a requirement for an increase of parliamentary constituencies in Terai because the population had increased considerably from 43 percent in 1991 to 48 percent in the 2001 census. However, this requirement was never considered leaving Madheshi feeling excluded. In 2006, November the constitution was amended which promised citizenship to those born before 1990 but failed to address those born after 1990. Terai-based political parties began the Madhesh Andolan (Madhesh Movement) against the constitution, which couldn't guarantee their rights. The movement turned into a violent conflict in which the data of over 200 abductions and 85 killings since December 2006 was released by UNHCR in February 2008. The violence was stopped with the 22 Points Agreement which facilitated them to participate in the Constitutional Assembly (CA) Election on April 10, 2008.

It was believed that the Constitution of Nepal 2015 would address their demands from the 22 points agreement, however it didn't. That's when the Madhesh movement took a violent turn that resulted in the deaths of approximately 45 people. As documented by Human Rights Watch, thousands were injured as well.

The Madheshi revolution ensured a significant breakthrough in shaping the political institution of the country. Still, it seemed to have been derailed from the common demands of the people. Lately, political activism seemed to revolve around the interests of few egocentric leaders and geopolitical players. Incidents like Gaur Hatyakanda seemed to bring extremism in the movement and on the other hand also increased the faultline between the

ethnic group. Unnaturally close ties with the Indian ally, supporting the blockades of goods in Nepal-India border, harsh protests against the promulgation of Constitution of Nepal 2015 led to further resentment. The demonstration of this outrage was seen on 24 August, in Tikapur Municipality, where seven policemen as well as an 18-month-old boy were killed by protesters. But the lives were not only taken by the protesters, as 16 members of public in 5 Terai districts with no association with violence were killed within a month of this horrific event, as reported by the same.

After all these years of political turmoil, identity-politics has played a vital role to ensure the much deserved recognition to a handful of Madheshi leaders in vital political posts. But the reforms that those leaders were supposed to do is still questionable. The socio-political and economical position of the people still does not seem to have increased significantly. According to Central Bureau of Statistics 2011, economics status of Brahmin, Chhetri, Dalit and Janajati caste of hilly and Terai region was studied and it was found that 29.334% of people of Terai origin are under the poverty line. As reported by The New Humanitarian, more than 40% of the Madheshi still do not have citizenship or voting rights and only 15% of the 330 Nepalese parliamentarians are Madhesi.

The greater question that haunts Madheshi till date is their nationality, and the barrier between politics and people has caused this question to arise in the first place. Now the time has come for the people of Terai to come out and be politically aware, be it to vote out their so-called leaders who have derailed the prime agenda of Terai just to fulfill their vested interests, or to choose their bonafide leaders who will thrive not to make Terai a separate autonomous region in the name of development but to make it a stronger spine of the whole country for the collective growth of Terai and the nation.

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INTERVIEW WITH Samaira Shrestha

Samaira is a student, model, political leader, and a social worker. She loves to be occupied, and do recreational activities. She also hosts fashion shows and concerts.

She thinks that LGBTQ+ community should involve in politics to change the policy regarding our rights because the person who are in power will not know our struggles. If we are not engaged in politics then impossible to change this system by giving interviews and spreading awareness about LGBTQ+.

- **The Nepalese society is very conservative, and there isn't much representation for the LGBTQI+ community. In such a scenario, how do you describe the hardships that you faced during your transition?**

Growing up, I was not sure about my sexuality. We were taught that the line between gender exists, I accepted it without question. Although I was a girl mentally and emotionally, my physical structure dictated my gender. I had to keep this feeling a secret since society could not understand what I was going through. I felt alienated which led me to overthink and chose self-destruction as an escape. The constant criticism of the teachers on dancing instead of being sporty or more "manly" was also of no help.

I first came out to my parents and not my friends. Since most of us are prejudiced on the topic, many will reject this idea and not accept the differences in society. Opening up although was difficult, my parents took it positively which made it easier for me to accept myself even more. Although my relatives could not comply with the idea, my parents fought for my freedom and I am glad I'm making them proud now. After coming out, I was left behind by most of my friends, taunted for my identity, and also the number of people following me on social media platforms decreased drastically. Now I have a close circle of filtered friends who don't judge me and are the reason behind my happiness.

It took me 21 years to find, accept myself and live my life. And these hardships are not limited to people in Nepal but throughout the globe.

- **How have you been tackling online bullying/harassment?**

I consider myself fortunate to have very little experience with online harassment, but I still have to face it to some extent. Being a transwoman is not easy. Physical harassment is very frequent. The challenge starts as soon as I set foot outside the house. The judgy eyes, trash-talking and constant teasing have become a daily struggle. The harassment I had to go through as a child makes all the present experiences unnoticeable. It has made me bolder, stronger, and more powerful. I try to take this negativity and try to inspire people on such matters. We hear about online bullying and how they affect mental health. People get suicidal due to it. We cannot let this negativity rule us and try to find a positive aspect in everything we do.

- **You once stated in an event that you are inspired by Anjali Lama. How has she inspired you?**

Being the first transgender woman to participate in Miss Universe, she has inspired me to be not limit myself. She has represented Nepal and the Nepalese LGBTQI+ community, which is a big achievement for all of us. She has helped me emotionally and taught me how happiness can be spread. She has also motivated me to find positivity despite all the challenges and is very close to my heart. Also, Anjali Lama gave me the courage to come out.

- **What has been the biggest struggle that you have faced as a woman?**

There's one "struggle" that stands out for me. Every time I go out and there's police checking, it's daunting to communicate with the officers. I'm a woman now but my license states that I'm a man, and most people are unknown about the LGBTQI+ community. But hurtful enough, those who do view me as a sex worker. I hate that I'm pulled over and asked for my number or some other stuff. It is offensive and it reflects the way society views me. Even when I am strong, things like this are very disturbing. I believe everybody faces struggles, but it is up to us to be able to face these struggles head-on and win.



Source: twitter.com/shresthasamaira

- **After becoming a woman have you felt like you have lost or maybe even gained some opportunities?**

I would be wrong to say you lose any kind of opportunities after the transition, at least in my case. I got an opportunity to become a regional member of the Bibeksheel Sajha Party, and believe that the only reason I am here is because of my identity. I had to sacrifice some opportunities, my modeling career as a man is now over. This has only made me stronger and given me a positive outlook on life. I grabbed every opportunity that came my way rather than trip over what was past me.

- **You are a woman from the LGBTQI+ community. You are an eminent part of a political party too. Where do you think that members of the LGBTQI+ community stand in political arenas?**

My involvement in "Enough is Enough" satyagraha, which was held last year, will hopefully answer this question. I was on a hunger strike for nine days and got a lot of praise from the media who ran to cover me. After mentioning my gender identity, a lot of cameras would turn the other way and expose me to utterances of disgust. I suddenly became a head-turning subject of mockery. This is how insensitive people are towards the LGBTQI+ community, even when it involves politics that ensures benefit for all. The community's involvement in politics is still considered taboo. This can be addressed and corrected when all the members of this community are politically aware. We are misrepresented by the people in power. Once we correct this through true representation, only then the policies and societies will come to fruition.

- **How did you celebrate your pride month?**

This is my very first pride month as a transwoman. However, pride months don't weigh as much to me. I say this because I constantly feel like we are only given importance in June. And that too seems pretentious. We are overlooked, undermined and outcast for the rest of eleven months but as soon as it's pride month, fake applauds and appreciation are showered. After always being invisible and unappealing, this whole month of chi-chi is quite unsettling to me. True love and support wouldn't look at the calendar. For me every minute is pride minute, every day is a pride day and every month is pride month because I accepted myself for who I am.

- **How could youths support strengthening the LGBTQI+ community and what message would you like to put out in the world for the people who understand the LGBTQI+ community?**

Empathize, don't just sympathize. Look at the world from our eyes too. Spreading hate just because you cannot understand something is not an answer. Help us create an environment where we can express ourselves. Sexual orientation and gender identity should never be rusty painful chains that hold you captive. The suffocation one feels just because of the fear of coming out and not being accepted is beyond most of our imagination. After 21 years of said suffocation, I have accepted myself and love myself. I would urge all of us to embrace ourselves. I am working to create a society that doesn't consider this community a misfit and treats us with love and respect. A small note to parents, love your children no matter what they identify as. They should not comply with the sick rules of society to be worthy of your love. Acknowledging this would make the world a better place, not just for the LGBTQI+ community but for everyone.

Stories of Kathmandu University

Sandip ThapaKathmandu University School of Law
(First Year student)
Columnist at Sanghu News

“Only the ones who embrace all the struggles in hopes of survival are victorious.”

From the alluring lands of Palpa to the premises of Kathmandu University has traveled a story, a story that is synonymous with resilience. The pages of this story are inked with perseverance and patience. This is the story of Sandip Thapa.

Sandip is a 20-year-old visually impaired first-year student currently pursuing law at Kathmandu University School of Law. A columnist for Sanghu News, he has brought home many laurels. He actively participates in events and even hosts them. He is a diligent and passionate student who is the personification of “the sky is not the limit”. In his own words, what he saw, felt, experienced, and studied inspired him to take treads towards legal education and ultimately to beautiful Dhulikhel. Sandip witnessed and experienced discrimination on many levels. It was unsettling to him how ignorant society could be. He felt drawn to learning about the roots and solutions of these inequalities. He felt like the whole system was flawed and wanted

to make a difference. So, after completing his high school from Palpa, he extensively researched and penned what course he should opt for. He concluded that pursuing law would quench his thirst to make this society a better place for millions like him. He applied for the BBMLLB course in KUSL and got accepted.



With his neatly folded clothes, he carefully packed his hopes and aspirations and kept them in the core of his heart. He then embarked on his journey, a mile closer to his dreams.

Sandip wishes to be synonymous to change. Like almost every human being, he wants to climb insurmountable ladders of success. He wishes to wear a black coat and advocate for the needy. He doesn't want to be the only incredible visually-impaired lawyer. He wants to see the disadvantaged fighting alongside him and hundreds and thousands of persons with disabilities to be their own lawyers. What is paramount to him is that he paves the way for others in society to experience the same thrill of triumph. He wants to be able to invigorate such a world in which each individual, indifferent of their physical ability, caste, gender, etc., has an equal voice. To be able to construct a world where differently-abled people do great things without facing the unnecessary barriers is what he truly strives for.

To Sandip, he is a disgruntled character in a world pronounced just and fair by the well-fed. This character dares to dissent from that notion and sees the sphere through the eyes of the starving.

Sheltered by the Pine trees, the sparrows sing their songs. Bewildering bees are charmed by the company of blossoming roses. This makes Sandip think how undebatable Darwin's theory is. “Survival of the fittest” is the ultimate truth of existence. Through the apocalypses, had humans not dared to evolve, neither would he be narrating his story and nor would you be reading it. As a visually impaired person, Sandip believes that there are many such hurdles in life. Only if one mutters all the courage and puts up a fight, one survives. Only the ones who embrace all the struggles in hopes of survival are victorious. This is generally true for everyone, but he emphasizes how cardinal this idea is to him as a person with a disability.

There is a part of him that longs to go back to college, hear the birds chirp, and feel the breeze sneak past the pine trees making her way to his classroom. He wishes he could physically interact with his classmates, teachers and get to know them more. He is grateful that they are respectful, helpful, and joyous. He feels like he is missing out on his university experience. Nonetheless, he is grateful for all the online resources that are provided in virtual classes. It has saved him all the time and effort he would have to spend scanning and digitizing books and notes.

The infrastructure of KUSL, as Sandip finds, is not very friendly when it comes to differently-abled people. He finds the premises complicated and confusing. He often worries that it would pose great difficulties for wheel-

chair users. But there is always plenty of room for improvement. Sandip is ready to welcome the changes in the nearest future.

There are times his heart aches thinking how disability is still considered a burden, even as a sin. Jhamak Ghimire was given the “blessing” to die sooner. Sandip hates to admit that there are countless Jhamak Ghimires in the country who share her grievances. Even though there can be many Jhamaks who could make big names for themselves, alas they cannot. He firmly believes that society is so accustomed to seeing differently-abled people as mere characters to pity. He feels like he is constantly patronized and undermined for being visually impaired. As portrayed in movies, people think that there needs to be a hero who comes to rescue the differently-abled. It might be because, as he adds, our perception is molded that way. To cater to that very vision, there is a subconscious prejudice, at times intolerance, against what we're not used to seeing. This might be equally unerring when it comes to gender, caste, social status, or anything in the social spectrum.

What Sandip has experienced is that people tend to turn their heads and point fingers when they see some “unusual” members of society thrive. This even results in mockery and unnecessary patronization. He finds it sneering when he is constantly and unnecessarily undercut. Even though there are sincere concerns, it doesn't quite sit right with him. Those concerns are intrusive and almost dictating. It's like he is expected to be in the rusted shackles of definitions. But Sandip is more than the tarnished restraints.

Sandip gets starry-eyed when he thinks about the magnificence of diversity in the world. Everyone is so beautifully different. They have their flaws and their perfections. He believes that diversity is what makes it all worth it.

Nothing is flawless. Even the epitome of beauty, the moon has her flaws. That doesn't make her any less worthy of praise. This is the view Sandip holds in life. He believes that flaws are what truly carve you. If there are hurdles in life, they teach you how to take leaps. Imperfections are the best teachers one can ever ask for. There are no chains that can confine one's courage and confidence, not even a disability. Sandip's story is an iridescent one. Entrenched in the eminence of his struggles, this story, and the protagonist is set on his voyage to the end of the rainbow. To make other stories worth a read, Sandip has ineffably worked and is working on his own story.

-GCT Correspondent

Questioning : Sowing Courage and Reaping Grace

Themed Section



Questioning demands courage. Never in the history of humanity, asking questions has been easy. From Bruno, who was burnt at stake for his unorthodox views of the heliocentric solar system to Galileo, societies all across the globe have put down voices and discouraged questioning in one way or the other. Today's world of conspiracy theories, fake news, populism and what not!, moreover have posed serious threats to the very act of interrogation. Amidst menaces, inquiry becomes possible only with a fearless mind and a brave heart.

Where the mind is without fear, as Rabindranath Tagore writes, the head is held high. Questioning is inevitable after we accept yet challenge our need for security in the society with full confidence. The void of questions appears when everyone has come to terms with everything by themselves or by coercion. Certainly good in the short run however, it results in an ever stagnant and dull society.

Can we even imagine the fate of human civilization if people like Edison, Newton, Einstein, Lincoln and Rawls stepped back to put forth their ideas and did not ask questions due to fear? Of course, the world would have been dark, dirty, miserable and pathetic. There is no doubt that questioning has been the fuel driving humans from the primitive stone age to today's world of information and technology.

Questioning is a multi dimensional process of learning by which one asks questions regarding a context from different perspectives. It is recursive and continues to ad-infinity until one

reaches a resolution mostly in the form of a question. The last question is considered the best answer.

One must acknowledge his/her ignorance of the answer apriori before actually venturing into the process. Similarly, it requires continuous reflection and self awareness and one must show perseverance and modesty for being able to ask a penetrating question. Apart from personal discipline, one has to undergo enormous criticisms of all sorts. More importantly, questioning authorities-government, religion, stakeholders and intellectuals, majority, tradition, and revelation involves a great deal of risk and even imminent danger to life.

Therefore, courage to question draws grace; grace of truth, honesty, life, nature or god himself. Although the path of questioning is arduous calling for enormous courage, grace sustains and fulfills it. It provides patience and strength to the one devoting himself to the very act of questioning for he is the captain of the entire humanity.

May it be Bruno mentioned earlier or Bhagat Singh; who was hanged till death at the age of 23, nothing but grace defines the courage to stand for their questions till death. The life of Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in Jail or even Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of India's independence movement is incomprehensible to the human mind and should be attributed to grace itself.

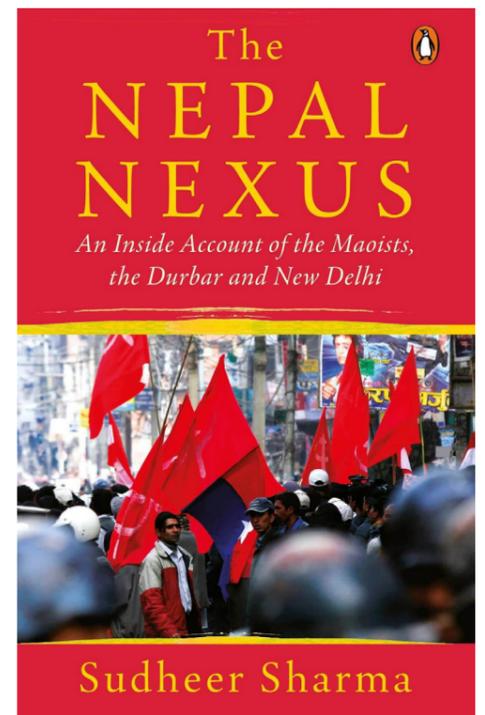
The unexamined life, as Socrates puts, is not worth living. Scrutiny in each and every aspect of human life and ultimately oneself involves questioning. The remedies for the pressing issues of today ranging from global poverty, ever increasing inequality, environmental crisis, global warming, climate change and many more lie on the other side of the right kinds of questions. Though questioning becomes dead without courage, one who dares in the quest is blessed with grace. The elegance bestowed assures meaning and purpose to one's life. Will you have the courage to question when it comes to deciding the career you want to pursue or the partner you want to marry in your life? If yes, then grace can never leave you and I assure you will have a merry life!

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Book review of "The Nepal Nexus"

This book written on the periphery after the 1990 people's movement depicts how a small rebellion in remote districts became a power, changing the political scenario in the country forever.

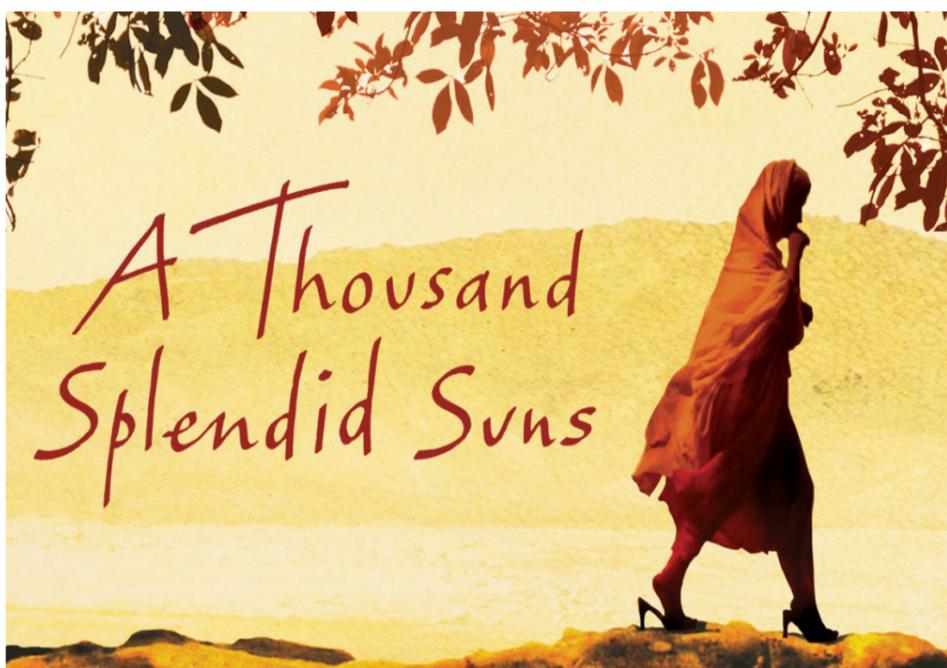
Saying of 13 generations of rulers from Gorakhnath is long forgotten. In the durbar discontent resides as revolutions of 1990 limited crown within the constitution. Amidst push and pull among parties in parliament unusual conditions brewed. Some ultimatum submitters in 1990 have turned into a small militia called Maoists. The peace loving maharajah kept putting aside intervention despite emerging rebellion due to vested interests. The parliament tried to resolve the situation with the use of Police launching kilo-sera operations only in avail of Maoists boosting their morale. The durbar sprung in action doing talks with Maoists. The peaceful maharajah's "operation hawk" could be launched which would give him power but the unpredictable series of events shattered their plans. He was wiped out by his own heir over matrimonial issues. Now seeing blood, Maoists went to kill, denouncing monarchy. His brother, the new king started his own "actions" ignoring pleas of assistance from police forces, playing Whack-A-Prime Minister and lastly negotiating with Maoists. A failed Election brought the king to his knees, and now seeing final hope in Delhi. The figurehead of politics "Girijababu" now realized deception was from durbar and launched his own contacts with Maoists, which was received more enthusiastically as their foremost dream of the Republic. The king took all powers, taking the bet to chest. Now, Durbar is shattered, as all parties consolidate with Maoists against the "tyranny and authoritarian" regime with support from Delhi. Movement had started, Kathmandu saw people swarming into the street against the monarch. The parliament was restored, which would now decide the future of the country. Tired of politics played by durbar, Girijababu concluded with his new allies that Monarchy would be removed once and for all. The republic was created and Girijababu saw the lethality of Maoists when they rejected him for first president, realizing it was a blunder removing monarchy after all. For now victors were Maoists becoming haystacks



from needle in haystack. However, they couldn't enjoy as the "Madhesi" movement with support of Delhi rising from a formerly neglected state. So began the start of political play of "Post Maharaja" Nepal which is running till date as the crow flies.

The book is priceless as content presented by the Author, Mr. Sudheer Sharma maintains an extremely honorable neutrality when writing on political matters. It perfectly matches the quote "God is in the Details", as here the scenario has been presented from every root including preparation phase by Maoists, spot-on timeline and freakishly accurate depiction of objectives of all sides, becoming the main factor for this book standing out in the crowd. However, the missing factor of common people's contemporary perceptions and their heuristic change towards monarchy makes books dull and boring to read. Summing up pros and cons, in my view the book is a must read when it comes to seeing contemporary politics of that time, for its almost mythical inclusion of hidden inside/background details.

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Book review of "A thousand splendid suns"

Khaled Hosseini with "A Thousand Splendid Suns" has yet again provided his readers the taste of what Afghanistan was like during the war. With the protagonists as females the war seemed as an unfathomable story of dismay. The story begins with Mariam, a magnificent character who not once in her life had savored happiness. The scanty love of her father, untimely marriage and a monstrous husband had all piled up to make her life somewhat unlivable. Laila on the other hand had a decent childhood before war ceased everything she held as her own. The strange encounter of these

two characters under an unimaginable circumstance drives the story into a mixture of inexplicable emotions.

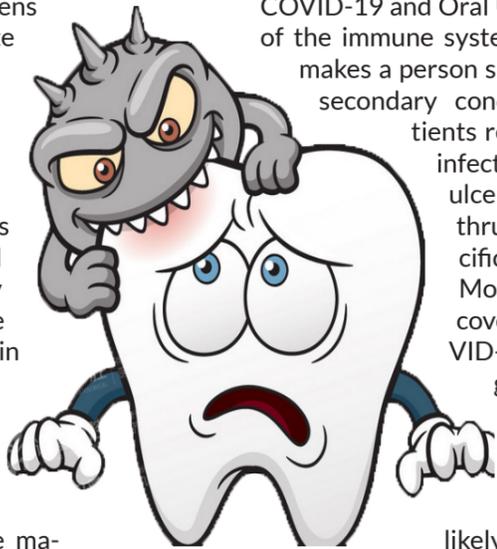
It's safe to say that this book is the saddest book I have ever read. It is like one murky night with no glimpse of sunshine. Even the strongest of hearts will fail to contain their tears to the tragedy of Laila and Mariam. Hosseini with "The Kite Runner" gave a taste of war-affected Afghanistan but with "A Thousand Splendid Suns" he prevails. The tale of Laila and Mariam will drown the readers into unbearable sorrow.

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Oral Health: Indicator of Overall Health



The immune system and the patient's overall well-being are closely associated. It is not quite emphasized that dental health directly affects the immune system's response. Many times, mouth issues are the first sign of an underlying health issue. An unhealthy mouth may indicate systemic diseases such as atherosclerosis, pulmonary disease, diabetes, gestational diabetes, hypoglycemia, osteoporosis, and even kidney disease. The teeth, periodontium, and biofilm act as reservoirs for pathogens and may facilitate pathogen reproduction in the lungs by aspiration. There is good evidence that oral hygiene can reduce the chances of developing viral acute respiratory diseases, which have been documented in numerous studies.



Poor oral health has been linked to the acquisition of SARS-CoV-2, the major concern for today. Research indicates that the mouth, acting as an entry point for SARS-CoV-2 is because cells in the tongue, gums, and teeth have angiotensin-converting enzyme-2 (ACE-2). This is the protein receptor that allows the virus to enter the cells. Ergo, in those with poor oral health, the presence of ACE-2 receptors appears to be

higher, increasing the possibility of entry of the virus.

Dental correlations with SARS-CoV-2:

COVID-19 and Xerostomia: Xerostomia/dry mouth is regarded as an early symptom of COVID-19. Studies demonstrate that dry mouth may be the direct effect of the SARS-CoV-2 virus infecting and damaging the salivary glands.

COVID-19 and Oral Ulcers: Impairment of the immune system by SARS-CoV-2 makes a person susceptible to other secondary conditions. Some patients recovering from the infections have reported ulcers in the mouth; thrush-like or unspecified.

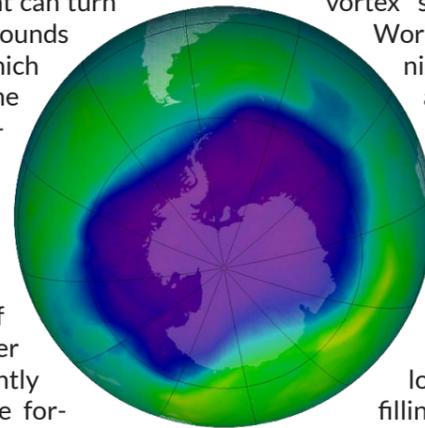
Moreover, they discovered that COVID-19 patients with gum disease were 3.5 times more likely to need a ventilator and 4.5 times more likely to undergo intensive care, as well as 8.8

times more likely to die when compared to those without gum disease. Consequently, we can conclude how important good oral health is for preventing COVID-19 complications and managing them. A healthy mouth is essential to overall health.

Antarctic Ozone Hole Deepens With Time

The Antarctic ozone hole, which is one of the largest and deepest ozone holes of 2020, was only growing with passing time. It was the early 1980's when scientists began to realize that the ozone layer is depleting drastically in the South Pole.

This south pole located ozone hole bears a stratospheric cloud which only forms at very low temperature. This cloud contains ice crystals that can turn non-reactive compounds into reactives, which rapidly destroy the ozone as soon as sunlight reacts with it. 2020 has been driven by a strong, stable, and cold polar vortex, which kept the temperature of the ozone layer over Antarctica consistently cold resulting in the formation of more stratospheric clouds, which has caused the ozone hole to reach its maximum size.



This hole was driven by an unusual and strong polar vortex. And along with it the uncommon persistence and extent of the Antarctic polar vortex favoured the formation of this "deep" ozone hole. This annually occurring ozone hole was a result of the emission of excess man-made gas, chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's), emitted from automated coolers, refrigerators as cooling agents, and aerosol spray.

A large region of cold air rotates around Earth's polar region. In 2021, a mass of extremely warm air threw the freezing polar vortex out of balance creating a slip in the north pole axis which looked like a growing pair of legs. The CAMS researcher said that this split is creating a pathway for ozone rich air to rush back

into the area above the north pole.. The southern ozone hole has been shrinking by about 1% to 3% per decade since 2000. The northern hemisphere vortex is more unstable and warmer as compared to the southern one, due to increased atmospheric disturbance that lead to breaking of the vortex.

A study showed that the hole was caused by a polar vortex and closed when that vortex split. Reports from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on January 6, 2021, showed that the Antarctic ozone hole, one of the deepest and greatest gaps in the ozone layer in the previous 40 years, has filled. Although it came as a shock to the public, Covid 19 and lockdown had no effect in filling this hole.

If you are asking what you could do to prevent the depletion, you can buy refrigerators and a car that does not use CFCs as cooling agents. Buying aerosol products that do not use CFCs etc. Many countries and organizations are trying to ban those products which deplete the ozone layer. There is a significant drop in emission of CFCs in the atmosphere. Since ozone is a greenhouse gas its breakdown also affects the earth's climate. It is estimated that the full recovery of ozone level in the atmosphere is not expected until 2050. If the ozone layer slowly recovers in the coming decades, global warming might be reduced and the earth could regain its cooling property.

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Rishav Dhungels' Artworks

Air pollution: A Chain Reaction of Consequences.

Since its industrialisation in 1993 AD, Nepal's air quality has not been analysed once.

Daily Air Quality Index (AQI) readings disseminated through various channels do not encompass the industrial chemical residue in the air quality, nor do they provide a comprehensive reading of the pollutant content in the air and its implications.

The AQI measures the size of the dust particle, called fine particles (pm). The smaller the particles, the more likely they will enter the human body, thus more dangerous.

More specifically, it analyses pm2.5 content in the air and provides its data on Air quality.

In conversation with Dr Hemu Kafle, Director of Research at the Kathmandu Institute of Applied Sciences, she let us know that while the data we have is enough evidence to be concerned, the uncertainty borne of not knowing the components of the pollutants is even more damaging, seeing as how we cannot take mitigation measures against something we haven't identified.

Knowing the root causes behind disasters like the March smog are very important. Dr Indira Kandel, Senior Divisional Meteorologist at the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irriga-

tion) identified that we only saw 25% of normal seasonal rainfall levels last post-monsoon (October and November 2020) and Winter (December 2020-February 2021) seasons.

The dryness observed during March and April 2021 also contributed to the extreme drought which resulted in the forest fire.

The dryness observed during March and April 2021 also contributed to the extreme drought which resulted in the forest fires breaking out in the intensity that they did, inadvertently leading to Kathmandu's pm2.5 levels jumping from 40 mg/3 to 400mg/3, making it the most polluted air in the world for four days.

Today, it may seem that the smog is long gone. The power-washing of the Valley by the monsoon rains has left the air fresh and clean. However, being a valley, the nature of airflow in Kathmandu is such that air from within the valley has a hard time getting out. There is minimal transboundary pollution access- i.e most of the pollution is our own.

Dr Kafle explained- "The dust



Photo Credit: www.recordnepal.com

particles, containing their residue of industrial chemicals and other pollutants, descend and sediment into our water sources (rivers and lakes) and our soil, which in turn affect our crops, creating a cycle of poisonous consumption."

Testing in order to identify both the source and problem is necessary so that relevant precautions can be taken against such contamination of our natural environment.

Recent events should serve as a wake-up call for the government as well as the general public. Flimsy, performative policies and budget allocations in the name of "the environment", using it as an umbrella term to encompass all the different issues without addressing any one of them individually. Grants for re-

search must be allocated, policies should be introduced based on scientific consultation data, and they must be executed and implemented meticulously.

The chronic smog was triggered by the forest fires, but it simply enhanced the already deteriorating air quality due to vehicular emissions, brick kilns, garbage incineration and other evidence of rapid urbanization in the valley; all of which are civic and public actions. So while research is important, it falls flat if basic and necessary precautions are neglected.

-GCT Correspondent

Heavy Monsoon Rain Raises Settlement Issues

The authorities had promised people to move them elsewhere but relocation is a steady process.

The annual incessant monsoon rain increased the water level of rain-fed rivers at an alarming rate that left many settlements at high risk of flooding and landslides. The impacts of recurring hazards like floods and inundation are distinct in marginalized communities living in floodplains.

During the first week of the heavy rain Sindhupalchowk, Lamjung, Manang, Myagdi, Palpa, Kalikot were severely affected. The flash flood of Sindhupalchowk was suspected to be a cause of ice and muds movement underneath the glacier which ran down the hills and dumped in the low-lying areas. The landslide blocked the flowing Melamchi River which made it burst and submerged Melamchi town downhill in a thick layer of sand and mud. Hundreds of families residing in that area are relocated to public buildings away from the risk zone. The water-induced disaster damaged about 200 houses in the area as per the officials. People lost all belongings, land, and properties in a fraction of time and are considering manual labor or other means for a fresh start. The strange ordeal of being clueless about where to go as their homes and earnings are inaccessible is making people numb.

The high hills settlement of the country is severely affected. Khara settlement of Pyuthan is gradually sinking as the result of flash floods and landslides. Families started staying in cowsheds or relative's places as their houses are tilted with cracks. People at



Photo Credit: www.onlinekhabar.com

risky places are to be relocated to safer grounds but landslides erupted on those fragile parts have disrupted the road sections and the relocation process is not fully commenced. Additionally, villagers themselves don't want to leave their ancestral settlement and migrate. Shut off of gas and electricity, scarcity of food, and clean drinking water as aftermath of the disaster puts people in a frightful situation and prone to infectious diseases. Amidst the Covid-19 crisis, a large number of people living in relief camps and public buildings sharing common resources doesn't account to be an admissible solution. Relief aid sent in affected areas is suffering from

broken communication lines and vehicle movement disruptions due to landslide debris. The degree of safety for living in the water-logged residential area again is questionable. Rebuilding or settling quickly after floodwater recedes is risky. The structure should be checked for damage, foundation cracks, frayed electrical wires. Cleaning up the residential areas back to livable standards seems a daunting task as they are covered in sludge and mud from flooding. The area becomes inhabitable; it remains barren and filled with flood sediments even after many years which leaves people with no choice but migrate elsewhere. The heavy rainfall and erosion washes away

the water-soluble nutrients and leaves agricultural lands prone to leaching. The surface run-off bringing issues of land change from fertile to barren is colossal damage to those who live off agriculture. Land settlement disputes after water-induced disasters are recurring. People whose properties have been partially or completely damaged by the calamity demand compensation. The government assists to a certain degree but the dilemma of the family whether to buy food or build a safe place with the compensation continues. About 100 displaced families of Durgabhagawati Rural Municipality-5 in Rautahat are in a pitiable situation living in a flimsy tent pitched on the road after the houses were flooded by the Jhaj River. Continuous downpour makes living under tents even harder. The authorities had promised people to move them elsewhere but relocation is a steady process. Low source income groups, landless, marginalized poor people are most vulnerable during such humanitarian crises and are often forgotten. People have no escape from relief camps with their poverty-stricken households.

In a country with rugged topography, flood and landslides are not unexpected; the failure to integrate science in early preparation and awareness only after disaster strikes is the reason for the torrential rain to attack the settlements mercilessly.

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The Hubble Telescope and the Exciting Universe it Unveils

Even with several scientific discoveries and manpower, we only know a little about something as vast as the universe. Some scientists believe that the universe has no end while others are curious about dark energy - considered to be the biggest mystery in the universe. Even though scientists have worked on molding numerous scientifically productive human enterprises throughout the years, the Hubble Telescope remains to be one of the most ambitious and revolutionizing human enterprises ever conceived.

Despite its age, the Hubble Telescope remains one of the best telescopes in the world since its launch into orbit by Space Shuttle Discovery on April 24, 1990. Compared to the stupendous 8-10m telescopes built on the ground, with even larger ones targeted in the future, the 2.4m Hubble mirror is relatively average for modern-day research telescopes, and with optics in their third decade of operation. Named after the

American astronomer, Edwin P. Hubble, this telescope consistently outperforms many advanced ground-based telescopes and is still interpreted as the pinnacle of optical and ultraviolet astronomy.

Hubble orbits about 547 kilometers above the Earth and travels at the speed of 17,500 mph. Hubble has scruti-



nized back into the very distant past, to locations more than 13.4 billion light-years from Earth. Ever since the astronauts decided to use Hubble to conduct a bold and daring experiment to investigate the universe in 1995, the gamble with Hubble has paid off, even to this date. To this

day, Hubble has been sharing freshly processed images featuring marvelous galaxies, sparkling

star clusters, and celestial nebulae. Hubble has found supermassive black holes, measured the universe's expansion rate, beheld the birth and death of stars, characterized planets among other stars among many other discoveries.

We have come to know that galaxies are like the islands of the universe. Hubble, initially, captured the faint glow of myriad galaxies that had not been seen before. However, with time, it has given us stunning peeks inside the cloud of dust and other components that reveal the baby star systems along with the crisp view of the outer planets, year after year. Data obtained from Hubble has revolutionized our understanding of the cosmos. We now know that the universe is as old as 13.8 billion years, and we can also make more accurate estimations of the expansion rate. It has helped us witness the birth of stars, their deaths and it has also imaged shock waves around stars traveling in the cosmos. It has also captured planets orbiting other stars and has even caught the comet Shoemaker Levy-9 colliding with Jupiter in 1994. It has helped us watch comets and asteroids break apart.

NASA had originally expected Hubble to last 15 years, but with the frequent maintenance visits from the Space Shuttle, it is nearing the fourth decade of

operation. But, recently, the maintenance has been sidelined by issues with its 1980s computer. Still, the operation team is confident that this space telescope will return to its operational status in no time. Hubble's discoveries are deemed revolutionizing in every aspect of astronomy and the spectacular images obtained from it have opened up a grand vista of the universe which was formerly only probed with imaginations. This telescope has paved a way for many other telescopes and has connected the intellectual curiosity of our species, isolated on a solitary planet, to an infinitely splendid universe. It has been coruscating the earth with a deeper understanding of how the universe works and has fundamentally changed our understanding of the cosmos. With over 1.3 million observations since the mission was launched, the demand for its use in research keeps exceeding. But the story of the Hubble is not the one with loss, challenge, or triumph. It explains why we know what we know about the universe and even our acknowledgment of why we are here, on a small planet, inside of more than billions of galaxies that float throughout creation.

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES

• IAHR- Asia 2021

The 3rd IAHR-Asia Symposium on Hydraulic Machinery and System is to be conducted on November 22-23, 2021.

International Association for Engineering and Research in the Hydro-Environment (IAHR) is an internationally autonomous body of engineers and water experts working in the fields of hydro-environmental sciences and their practical application. It supports and encourages both research and its application while striving to lead to sustainable development, optimization of the management of worldwide water resources, and industrial flow processes.

The IAHR-Asia conference is organized every two years, the third edition of its kind will be held as IAHR-Asia 2021 in Kathmandu, Nepal organized by the Turbine Testing Lab of Kathmandu University in November 2021 chaired by the vice-chancellor of the Kathmandu University Prof. Bhola Thapa.

More on: <http://iahr-asia2021.ku.edu.np/>

• CESA - 12th Binennial Conference

The 12th Binennial Conference is set to be held on 25 -26 September 2021.

As a forum for exchanging comparative insights, the 12th Biennial Comparative Education Society of Asia (CESA) Conference will contribute to bridging the gulf between studies of formal and informal learning. In addition to keynotes, plenaries, and parallel sessions, the conference will feature poster presentations, panel discussions, and a pre-conference writing workshop.

More on: <https://kusoed.edu.np/cesa/>



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GCT AND ACKUAIN

Green Club of Thoughts- GCT, founded in 2007, is the first inter-departmental club that has a blend of all the schools of Kathmandu University (KU). Intending to improve educational, cultural, physical and mental, and literary abilities, GCT has been working rigorously to reach its goals to connect and inspire KU students. GCT has a vision to expose the matter of technical, social, national and International issues to students of Kathmandu University, making them engaged in activities (outreach, debates, interactions, seminars etc.), simultaneously enhancing professional and technical skills coupled to their field of interest. This diversity of GCT has presented itself to be a home for boundless opportunities and experiences to many. GCT has set out a mission to bring together all students from Kathmandu University's seven schools (Engineering, Science, Medical Sciences, Arts, Law, Education, and Management) and engage them in a series of activities to fulfill the club's mission and objectives, exposing them to a wide range of topics ranging from technical and social issues to national matters of subject. With the same mission and vision, to effectuate one of the objectives of the club, it publishes a tri-monthly semi-scholarly trans-disciplinary journal 'acKUaint'.

'acKUaint' is a tri-monthly journal that comprises semi-scholarly, inter-disciplinary and as well as trans-disciplinary articles collected from all seven schools of Kathmandu University. This newsletter has become the prime platform for undergraduates to exhibit their writings and artworks. With collective news from KU schools, entire Nepal, and all over the globe, it consists of disciplinary and interdisci-

plinary articles, literature and art, and so on. This newsletter also serves as a platform for individuals who have a spark for writing for there is also plenty of room for creative pieces of writing and art. Through this newspaper, the club aims to bring together the students from all of Kathmandu University and provide them a forum for fair news coverage, ranging from events of KU to national, socio-political, and international news

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